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God and the Juggernaut:
Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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Department of Sociology

Professor Gordon Fellman, Advisor

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Farzin Vahdat

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ABSTRACT

This study is a theoretical analysis of Iran's intellectual encounter with modernity. The main purpose of this project is twofold: 1) to examine closely the concept and phenomenon of modernity in its western and global context, and 2) to analyze Iran's intellectual and cultural encounter with modernity in the period between mid 19th century until now, focusing on the major socio-political discourses and themes which have contributed to the shaping of Iranian consciousness and institutions in this period.

This dissertation consists of an introduction, three parts and a conclusion. The introduction lays out the intellectual framework of this study. Part I consists of two chapters and presents a theoretical discussion of modernity. Part II analyzes the Iranian intellectual encounter with modernity in the second half on the 19th century and the 20th century. Part three is comprised of two chapter also and is concerned with the analysis of the Islamic revolutionary discourse in Iran in the 1960s and '70s as well as with the post-revolutionary developments in the Islamic socio-political thought.

The methodology utilized in this project is textual analysis of the primary and some secondary sources on the philosophy of modernity as well as the Iranian intellectual discourses on modernity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Part I. Theoretical Understanding of Modernity	
13	
1. The Nature of Modernity	15
2. Dialogues with Modernity	73
Part II. Iran's Experiment with Modernity	
106	
3. The Dawn of Modernity in Iran: Positivist Subjectivity and Universalizable Subjectivity	107
4. The Eclipse of Universalizable Subjectivity and the Quest for a Collective Subject	188
Part III. The Islamic Discourse and Modernity	
270	
5. Islamic Revolutionary Thought: The Self as Mediated Subjectivity	271
6. Post-Revolutionary Discourses: The Contraction and Expansion of Subjectivity	359
Conclusion	411
Bibliography	421

Introduction

The Middle East and the West have had a history of contact, conflict and cultural exchange which goes back millennia. Historical events such as the Crusades and geographical proximity have intensified these relations. Their cultural affinity is even more pronounced because of their close religious traditions and their appropriation of Hellenism, albeit in different ways. Before the rise of modernity and the beginning of the colonial period in Europe, the Middle East and more specifically the Muslims of this region, held the upper hand in wielding "knowledge"-- what we call now area studies-- about the other. As Edward Said (1978) has forcefully shown, this trend was reversed with the rise of European colonialism and the advent of orientalism.

After World War Two and rise of the so-called Pax Americana, the study of the Middle East has gone through some changes. First, there was the phenomenal rise of the "modernization" theories hatched in American academia and with a strong applied emphasis and hands-on projects for the Third World in general and Middle Eastern countries in particular.¹ Second, traditional orientalist studies continued on the Middle East and particularly on Islam, albeit with some changes with regard to their overt association with colonialism.² To be sure, the depth and width of these studies on the Middle East and Islam, what can be termed as "classical studies" on Islam, is impressive and can help the reader to gain much valuable

¹ See for example Lerner 1985.

² See for example Lewis 1973, 1976; Hodgson 1993; Watt 1973, 1988.

knowledge about the region and cultural tradition and milieu. Yet, in addition to Western biases, they suffer from their overemphasis on historical Islam or from a view of the Middle East which is overly static. These "classical" approaches either view the Middle East only in its early and formative historical period, or as a monolithic entity with no or little change or even a capacity for change.

The second wave of change in studies of the Middle East has come about as a result of the emergence of political movements which, in one way or another, have appropriated Islam in their ideologies in the past three decades. These studies can best be characterized as a mixed bag in terms of their approach to their subject. Some continue the orientalist, what I referred to above as "classical" Western approach(e.g., Watt 1988; Lewis 1992), while others bring a more critical perspective to the issues involved (e.g., Mernisi 1992; Tibi 1990; Turner 1974). Thus the reaction to what might be termed as political Islam-- what is often referred to as "fundamentalist Islam"-- has ranged from paranoia (Huntington 1993) to more critical assessment of Islam and the Middle East and some recent works which delve deeply into the philosophies and cosmologies undergirding and sustaining the diverse populations of the region(e.g., Al-Azmah 1991; Shayegan 1992).

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and consequent events might be considered as a watershed for studies on Iran, the Middle East, and Islam. The Iranian case has been the subject of study in many books and articles. These works have addressed political, economic, social and cultural conditions of Iran and by extension the Middle East and Islam from a variety perspectives and theoretical positions.

The Marxist and neo-Marxist positions (e.g., Abrahamian 1982; Ashraf 1981; Moadel 1993; Skocpol 1982) have evaluated the class structure, ideologies and the state in Iran before and after the revolution of 1979. The classical approaches(e.g., Bakhsh 21984; Keddie 1981; Mottahedeh 1985) have shed light on the recent history of Iran by virtue of their immense scholarship of the region. Cultural and "Weberian" approaches have also had a great share of the scholarship on Iran in recent years (e.g., Arjomand 1984, 1986,1988; Dabashi 1989, 1993; Najmabadi 1987; Salehi 1988). Feminist scholarship on Iran has been very prolific and has enriched the discourse on Iran, the Middle East and Islam. These studies have shed light on the constitutive role of hierarchical gender relations in the shaping of the history and culture in these areas (e.g., Ahmad 1986, 1982; Mernisi 1991; Moghadam 1991; Haeri 1989) .³

However, not many works from a "critical theory"--I define the term below-- perspective have been presented on subjects pertaining to Iran and the Middle East, or Islam. Some few works have been produced very recently which are informed, at least tangentially, by critical theory(Al-Azmah 1991, 1993; Fischer and Abedi1990; Netton 1989; Boroujerdi 1994, 1996). But, these are few and many subjects pertaining to the Middle East could be addressed from this perspective. This dissertation aspires to contribute to this newly opened niche in the cultural studies of Iran and Middle East, from within a sociological tradition.

³ It is interesting to note that the developmental/modernization approaches have been mostly silent since the Iranian Revolution. Neither has the "dependency" approach been very prolific except during the early years of the revolution-- e.g., Halliday 1979.

Research problem

Iran is supposed to have undergone a rapid process of becoming modern in the twentieth century up to the Revolution of 1979. It was the belief and the aspiration of the Pahlavi elite and many outside observers that Iran was being rapidly transformed into a modern society in all its aspects.⁴ On the other hand Iran is supposed to have revolted against modernity after the revolution of 1979. It is often thought that the Iranian cultural experience, especially since the coup d'état that overthrew Mossadeq and restored the Pahlavi dynasty in 1953, was strongly influenced by a backlash to the process of modernity in Iran which culminated in the Revolution of 1979. Given these assumptions, the main purpose of this dissertation is twofold: 1) to examine closely the concept and phenomenon of modernity in its western and global context, and 2) to examine Iran's intellectual and cultural encounter with modernity in the period between mid 19th century until now, focusing on the major socio-political discourses and themes which have contributed to the shaping of Iranian consciousness and institutions in this period.

Theoretical Framework

In order to examine the concept and the phenomenon of modernity, I will utilize the notions of "subjectivity" and

⁴This desire for modernization was not confined to the Pahlavi elite. Most of the opposition, including the Marxist oriented Tudeh Party which sought a Soviet style modernization, were also obsessed to achieve it. See Najmabadi 1987.

"universality" as two pillars of modernity. These two notions are rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment and specifically in the works of Kant and Hegel.

By "subjectivity" I mean the property characterizing the autonomous, self-willing, self-conscious and self-defining agent. By "universality," I refer to the mutual recognition among the individual subjects of each others' subjectivity. While, as we will see throughout this study, the concept of universality has variegated and wide range of meaning, in its social and historical contexts it refers to the elimination of restrictions based on privileges, status, and/or other substantive considerations.⁵ In the modern era, subjectivity and universality have had a most peculiar relationship to each other. While they are closely connected and complementary to each other, at the same time they can be polar opposites. On the one hand, the subject in order to be a subject needs objects-- i.e., denial of the subjectivity of others. On the other hand, once humans acquire subjectivity, we all want to have it. This contradiction is probably one of the central aporias of our modern time which has shaped the efforts to objectify "others"-- e.g., class exploitation, colonialism, sexual and racial oppression, etc. But at the same time it has also shaped the liberation struggles against these.

I have used the term "pillar" to describe the two principles of subjectivity and universality in order to imply that they constitute the foundations of modernity and that they have elaborate ramifications and consequences. In the political sphere, the most

⁵ It is crucial to realize that it is the principle of universality which leads to the formation of the general will-- what Habermas has called the communicative ethics.

visible consequence of universalized subjectivity has been the birth of civil society and the emergence of the individual, political and civic rights and freedoms. In the cultural sphere, the most visible and probably important effect of modernity has been the transformation and weakening of, the "primary" relations (of domination). The emergence of the self-defining, autonomous subject has targeted first and foremost the relations in which the individual had been in position of subordination. Prototypical among these relations has been those between the transcendental God of monotheism and the human worshiper. This has had a ripple effect of weakening on other types of primary relations: the priest and parishioner, sovereign and subject, and most notably intrafamilial and Oedipal relations.

In a similar vein, as Habermas has argued, as a result of modern subjectivity, three moments of the lifeworld have been separated from their religious/metaphysical grounding. These three spheres are comprised of objective, social, and subjective worlds. By the "objective" sphere Habermas means those areas of social life which are related to cognitive and scientific propositional truths. The "social" sphere pertains to normative, moral and legal validity claims which constitute the basis of social relations. The "subjective" sphere has to do with the "expressive" realm of aesthetic evaluation (Habermas 1984, 71-720). In the premodern era these three components of the lifeworld were mediated through the sacred and were part and parcel of the religious establishment. It is only as a result of modernity that these three spheres are separated out and a "liguistification" of the sacred has taken place. The result is that

validity claims within each sphere are now exposed to criticism and open to revision(Habermas 1984, 52).⁶

On the other hand, modernity, especially as result of the consequences of subjectivity, has given rise to certain discontents which have limited and marred its emancipatory potentials. These discontents can be divided into two large categories: 1) those which the subject imposes on the "other," and 2) those in which the subject suffers more directly. To the first category belong problems of colonialism, the exploitation of the working class, oppression of women, minorities, etc. The subject of modernity-- i.e., the male, white, middle-class(and higher) Euro-American-- in order to become the subject has objectified the inhabitants of the Third World, Women, the indigenous proletariat, immigrants, minorities. This has had enormous consequences for the majority of the inhabitants of the world and has shaped world history, and will continue to do so for a long time to come.⁷

The second type of the discontents of modernity pertain more to the "self" of the modern subject. The roots of those types of problem can be traced back to what has been termed "direnption" from nature. The modern subject in order to achieve its status of

⁶ Notwithstanding the merits of this approach, the enormous contributions that monotheism has made to the emergence of modernity in the West should not be neglected. As we will see in this study, the structure of metaphysics in monotheism is dialectically linked to the emergence of modernity and it would be hard to imagine the rise of modernity without such structure.

⁷ But at the same time this process has showed the possibility of becoming subject to those "subalterns" and until subjectivity is universalize the struggles of the subalterns will continue. This is evident in national struggles for independence, the women's movement, civil rights and international human rights movements, as well as movements for social and economic justice.

subjectivity attempted to impress its purpose on nature and thus caused a separation between reason and nature, a problem to which Hegel and his Romantic predecessors paid a great deal of attention. The consequences of this process, in turn, can be divided into two classes of discontents. The first class has its roots in the development of what Habermas has called the "cognitive" sphere and the related extension of instrumental rationality. The second class has to do more directly with the loss of the alleged or real harmony of the premodern world, embodied in a notion of an eternal order, and loss of the "firm grounding" of the traditional society and its putative "contentments". In this study I attempt to consider the phenomenon of modernity in its entirety and take all its aspects into account.

The theoretical framework outlined above is grounded in an expansive span of theoretical formulations ranging from those of Kant and Hegel, to the "philosophical" writings Marx, Weber and Freud, to the works of the Frankfurt school, and to the works of Habermas and the debate on modernity and postmodernity. I utilize the term "critical theory" to describe this cluster of theoretical constructs without ignoring their heterogeneity within a larger homogeneity. Such an approach necessarily calls for an eclecticism within the range of this critical theory. Yet being eclectic does not necessarily mean being incoherent. In fact, since eclecticism allows the option of eliminating inconsistencies, it makes for improved coherence.

Against such a theoretical understanding of modernity, I will evaluate the key intellectual elements of the Iranian encounter with modernity in the period between mid 19th century until now. The

Iranian early intellectual encounter with modernity in mid 19th century, like many other countries of the Third World, was initiated as a response to imperialism, waged by the Tzarist Russia and Britain. In their attempts to counter the imperialist onslaught, the intellectuals and reformers in the 19th century in Iran appropriated two aspects of modernity that was available to them. One was what I have termed "positivist modernity," emphasizing such categories as technology and efficient bureaucracy found in the western modernity. The other was the cultural moment of modernity, focusing on the more democratic aspects of modern civilization. This dualist approach to modernity has characterized much of Iran's experience with modernity even though the democratic aspect has been eclipsed by the positivist element for most of this relatively short history. Nonetheless, the democratic aspect of appropriation of modernity in Iran is reflected in the attempts at building modern institutions, specifically those of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and has never been eradicated from Iran's cultural soil. As I will show in chapters five and six, even the Islamic revolutionary discourse contains elements of this moment of modernity and as such cannot be dismissed as entirely representing a negation of modern thought.

Research Design

In order to present a theoretical understanding of modernity, I have closely analyzed primary as well as secondary texts pertaining to what I designated above as "critical theory." I have examined the pertinent writings of Kant and Hegel on the issues and paradoxes of

modernity and follow these in the "philosophical" works of Marx, Weber, the Frankfurt school, Habermas, and the debate on modernity and postmodernity.

In order to analyze 19th and 20th century Iranian intellectual works and their relation to modernity, I have used the available primary and secondary sources in Persian and English. In cases when primary sources have not been available I have utilized secondary sources which closely represent the original works. Some of the works of some authors-- for various reasons, chief among them political-- have never been published in Iran, but they have been extensively quoted and represented in other scholarly works and I have made use of them.

This study consists of six chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. Part one which is comprised of chapters one and two are entirely devoted to a theoretical discussion of modernity. In chapter one I discuss the theoretical approaches to modernity in the works of Kant, Hegel and Habermas. In chapter two I briefly analyze the responses to modernity since Hegel by such thinkers as Marx, Weber, Adorno and Foucault among others.

Part two contains chapters three and four. In this part I examine the early Iranian intellectual appropriation of modernity and trace the later developments based on this appropriation. In chapter three I focus on the intellectuals of the mid 19th century and analyze their very important contributions to laying the foundations of the discourse of modernity in Iran. In chapter four I discuss the developments in the discourse of modernity in the 20th century

focusing on major intellectual trends and themes and their relations with, and appropriations of, different aspects of modernity.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran constitutes a watershed in the continuity of socio-political thought in that country. Part three of this study contains the materials pertaining to this very important phase in Iran's intellectual encounter with modernity. In chapter five, I will examine the Islamic revolutionary discourse of the 1960s and '70s and its relations to the ideas of modernity. In this chapter I will closely analyze the thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini, Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Motahhari, the so called architects of the Islamic Revolution. In chapter six, I follow up the developments in the Islamic socio-political thought in the post-revolutionary period and analyze the very important changes and ramifications therein. Because of the nature of this study, there will be a constant shift between an analysis of the ontological foundations of the discourses involved and their sociological implications. I have tried to keep the jargon to minimum without compromising the essential concepts.

As I argued earlier, studies of the Middle East are mostly confined to traditional types of scholarship, whether of the "orientalist" nature, the developmental/modernization or one variation of Marxist/dependency orientation or structural approach. Even though some cultural approaches toward the study of the Middle East are now appearing, this area is still to a large extent unexplored. As an approach grounded in cultural sociology, this study can make a significant contribution to cultural studies of the Middle East. It can also contribute to opening of the way for the

application of critical theory to the current conditions of many Third World countries in general and the Middle East and Iran in particular. These countries have been plunged into the modern situation and one way or another have to contend with it. Critical theory has developed in response to similar processes in the west in the past few centuries. Therefore, it has valuable lessons and insights for the countries that are now confronted by a similar process and face similar struggles and challenges. One of these insights, which has been stressed by more recent theorists of critical theory, is how close is the interaction between cultural development, economic development, and political democracy. This study, therefore, hopes to contribute to the consciousness about the inseparability of these spheres and the development of socio-political democracy in the context of Iran and the Middle East.

Finally, this study is intended to enrich the discourse on modernity and postmodernity per se. As any consciousness of the "self" is better achieved through the consciousness of the "other," the juxtaposition between modernity and elements of "premodernity" will help to expose the nature of modernity itself in larger relief.

Part I. Theoretical Understanding of Modernity

My purpose in the first part of this dissertation is to conduct an inquiry into the nature of modernity. Modernity can be approached from different perspectives. Modernization theories usually tackle the issue of modernity from the perspective of political economy and its changes and their effects on the social structure. Modernism, on the other hand, refers to the aesthetic dimension of the phenomenon and deals with the artistic processes of the modern era. Modernity proper can be conceived as the way modern people "feel" about themselves-- the sentiments and ethos prevalent in this age.

Modern people are somehow different from people in other epochs and other types of society (Jameson 1991, 310). To be sure, these three moments of the modern era are closely related to one another and interact with each other. The focus of my analyses is on the last of the trio, i.e., modernity proper, as the place where the contributions from two other realms are most "visible". Yet, occasional excursions into the other realms--political economy and aesthetics--are not only inevitable but quite essential.

In section one of chapter one, I will briefly discuss the centrality of the study of modernity in sociology and some of the approaches to the phenomenon within the discipline. In the second section I will attempt to identify the two categories of subjectivity and universality as the two "pillars" of modernity and their relations to each other. In the third section I will briefly discuss the role of Descartes in the rise of modern subjectivity. In the fourth section I

will elaborate on Kant's attempt to combine the two categories of subjectivity and universality. In the fifth section I will discuss Hegel's criticism of Kant's theory and his own attempt at a synthesis between these two categories. In the last section of chapter one I will try to give an account of the latest attempt to reconcile subjectivity and universality by Habermas through the medium of language.

Chapter two essentially continues the same themes as those I have discussed in chapter one. In section one of chapter two my focus is on the relationship between modernity and capitalism by analyzing some of the historical forces that gave rise to both modern era and modern capitalism such as the Reformation. In section two I will discuss the consequences of modernity and its manifold impact on the culture of the modern period.

Next, I will discuss some of the major thinkers and their contributions and reactions to modernity. Marx, Weber, Adorno, Foucault, Nietzsche and Althusser, among others, are those whose "dialogues" with modernity are of major significance. Lastly, I will attempt to consider the relationship between modernity and postmodernity in the light of the overall analysis undertaken in this study.

Chapter One

The Nature of Modernity

The Importance of Modernity in Sociological Thought

Since the very beginning of modernity, for which to set a fixed date is as arbitrary as anything else, social thinkers have thought of history in terms of evolutionary stages. Saint-Simon viewed history as the march of progress unfolding in the religious, metaphysical and positive stages consecutively. The positive stage corresponded to the industrial society which was unfolding in wake of the French Revolution. However, Saint-Simon's work was not confined to a simple periodization. He was also concerned with social dislocations and the potentials which were palpable in the transitional period to modernity.

August Comte continued the thoughts of Saint-Simon and maintained the same three stage view of history. He, however, more staunchly supported the replacement of the regulating functions of religion with those of positive science. This would have led to the establishment of a regime in which sociologists played the role of guiding prophets and positive sociology that of revealed truth and where parliaments would just be obstacles in the path of the smooth running of society based on the new prophecy and revelation.

Ferdinand Tonnies' work can be characterized as largely focusing on the transition between the premodern to modern social structure and the consequences of such transition. In other words, for Tonnies the tension between these two constituted the problematic of sociology. The dichotomy between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and

Gesellschaft (society) is the equivalent of historical periodization for Tonnies. By positing family relations as the prototype of the Gemeinschaft and exchange relations as the prototype of Gesellschaft, Tonnies attempted to analyze the rapid and tumultuous transition to which the German society had been subjected for a long time, but whose disrupting effects were being somewhat belatedly, compared to the rest of Europe, experienced in that country.

Durkheim's work on the two types of society, one based on mechanical solidarity and the other on organic solidarity addresses the same theme of dichotomous types of society but it turned Tonnies's division on its head.¹ Whereas Tonnies lamented the disruptive effects of the new type of society rather than the opportunities and freedoms that it offered, Durkheim, in his earlier writing, lampooned the closedness, parochialism and the stifling conditions of the old type of society. Later, Durkheim came to recognize the distresses accompanied by the new type of society and argued that its endemic strains and discontents were historically transient (anomie) and that it could change into a type of "posthistorical" epoch in which the freedom of the individual and social solidarity would be integrated in a just and egalitarian society.² (Seidman 1990, 219-220)

What all these approaches toward the modern era have in common is their dichotomous typology of society and culture. Even

¹ Tonnies had labeled the old type of society as organic and the new as mechanical (Tonnies 1963, 35-37).

² The polar dichotomy of this type has constituted the major problematic of other social thinkers and sociologists. Cooley's primary group versus secondary group, Robert Redfield's folk-urban continuum, Howard Becker's sacred and secular societies and Pitirim Sorokin's familialistic, contractual, and compulsory relations continue the interest in the topic.

Max Weber's more sophisticated analysis reflects the same dichotomization. Weber posited four types of social action, based on different kinds of rationality: Zweckrational, Wertrational, affectual based action and the traditional orientation. Zweckrational (end-means) is the characteristic of the new type of society while the other three types of "actions" represent more the old type of society, both in an ideal typical way. In the same vein Weber's analysis of authority and legitimization (rational, traditional, legal, and charismatic types of authority and the corresponding kinds of legitimization) can be seen as the dichotomous typology of society. Weber's thesis of increasing rationality is also a dichotomous approach with the difference that in some texts Weber recognizes the non-linear and less sharply dichotomous process of rationalization in different parts of the world at different times.³

The work of Parsons is also very much characterized by this dichotomy between the premodern and modern although he conceived them along five different lines. Parsons' fivefold pattern variables constitute the "complex" system that sees the premodern/modern less in terms of ideal type of polar dichotomous sets than as gradual continuums. What distinguishes Parson's five pattern variables scheme from previous ones is that they can be operationalized and utilized by more mainstream "empirical" research.⁴ This is most evident in the work of modernization school

³ By highlighting the issue of dichotomy, I do not mean to criticize it. Rather, my intention is to stress the magnitude of the interest and concern that the transition from one type of society and culture to another has historically generated.

⁴ Parsons conceived the pattern variables along some dilemmas and orientations: 1) gratification-discipline dilemma (affinity vs. affect neutrality); 2) the private vs. collective interest dilemma (Self-orientation vs. collective

which utilized the operationalized versions of Parsons' conceptual schemes, in order to promote "modernization" in the Third World after the second world war (Dube 1988, 20).

The early theorists of modernization in the 1950's and 1960's were in one way or another influenced by the ideas delineated above. Among them, David McClelland adopted the Parsonsian idea of achievement, which is in turn rooted in the Weberian analysis of protestantism (McClelland 1976). Among the theorists of the modernization school, Daniel Lerner's work is the most interesting in that its theoretical constructs and prescriptions are in some instances, contradicted by its "empirical" investigations--partly perhaps as a result of the tense political environment of the cold war.

Lerner, in his book, Passing of Traditional Society (1958) has identified two basic criteria for modernization: 1) psychic mobility with empathy as its mechanism; and 2) participation and its different moments such as economic, political, and media participation. By borrowing the term, "empathy" from psychology and combining it with the concept of physical mobility which is one accompaniment of modernity (expansion of the means of transportation in modern era), Lerner attempted to account for the personality type of the modern person.

However, the concept of "empathy" derived from psychic mobility is a vague notion as defined by Lerner: "Empathy, to simplify the matter, is the capacity to see oneself in other fellow's situation"

orientation); 3) the choice between types of value-orientation standard (universalism vs. particularism); 4) the choice between "modalities" of the social object (achievement vs. ascription); 5) the definition of scope of interest in the object (specificity vs. diffuseness). See Parsons 1963, 60-67.

(Lerner 1958, 50). This notion based on two psychoanalytic concepts, "introduction" and "projection" which Lerner equates with Freudian "identification" (others are incorporated because they are like me or others are incorporated because I am like them or want to be like them) does not make sense in this context (Lerner 1958, 49). However, the meaning of this concept emerges in the "empirical" part of Lerner's investigation. When the interviewer in Lerner's project poses the question, "what he would do about this problem if he were the president of Turkey" to a poverty stricken shepherd, the latter answers, "My God! How can you say such a thing? ... How can I ... I cannot ... a poor villager ... [I] master of the world[?]" (Lerner 1958, 24). Lerner describes this response as the indication for lack of "empathy" or "psychic mobility". This response is only remotely related to the concept of "identification" which is central to Lerner's formulation.

What this response by the shepherd is indicative of is more a lack of the ability to conceive of himself as an autonomous subject--"a master of the world". To his credit, Lerner recognizes "wide participation" as the central criteria of a modern society, (Lerner 1958, 51) which as I will try to demonstrate in the next pages, constitutes one of the pillars of modernity.

However, the saddest part of Lerner's approach, which is not atypical of the modernization school, was that when it came to real political development he opposed the very political movement which at least partly, embodied these two criteria. In the last chapter of the Passing of Traditional Society, Dr. Mossadegh is criticized for "overbidding his hand," "xenophobic extremism" and bringing the

"masses" of Iranian society into political participation--thus justifying the CIA's coup to topple his democratically elected government in 1953 (Lerner 1958, 391-92).

Two Pillars of Modernity

The shortcoming of the most of the accounts of modernity with the exception of Weber's and to a lesser extent Marx's, is their lack of an historical contextuality. The theoretical constructs since Tonnies to Parsons' pattern variables and the modernization school neglect the medieval embedding of the emergence of modernity in the European history. Thus they do not pay attention to the conditions that gave rise to modernity in the first place.

Kant in his essay "What is Enlightenment," clearly expresses what those conditions were. "Immaturity" as Kant calls the condition, "is the incapacity to use one's intelligence without the guidance of another" (Kant 1949, 132). This relation of dependence or "guidance," as Kant puts it, is at the core of the premodern society and culture. The opposite of this condition, which modernity is predicated upon, is referred to in the literature since Kant as "subjectivity". Hegel viewed the modern world principally in terms of subjectivity,

The principle of the modern world is freedom of subjectivity, the principle that all the essential factors present in the intellectual whole are now coming into their right in the course of their development (Cited in Habermas 1987a, 16).

In this passage and elsewhere(e.g., Hegel 1967 #124) Hegel seems to be emphasizing not only human autonomy but also its beneficiary, the individual. Thus, as the first pillar of modernity, subjectivity in this sense can be defined as the property characterizing the autonomous, self-willing, self-defining and self-conscious individual agent. Here a word about subjectivity and freedom is necessary. Although Hegel himself seems to have used both terms interchangeably, there is a difference between the two. Usually freedom refers to a negative aspect of freedom--i.e., a lack of restraint--but, subjectivity is more than the mere lack of restraint and also refers to positive action on the world.⁵

The second pillar of modernity is somewhat a more elusive category to analyze. It is, I would posit, the principle of universality. It may be conceived as the mutual recognition among the plurality of subjects of each other's subjectivity. Expressed differently and in its historical context, universality refers to elimination of restrictions based on privilege, status and/or other substantive considerations. In another,restricted, sense universality could be considered as the bourgeois formal equality before the law.

Hegel interpreted the two concept of subjectivity and universality as epitomized in the notion of civil society, which as he put it, is comprised of,

⁵ As Goethe's Faust would have said, in modernity, "man asserts himself against nature's tyrannical arrogance. See Berman 1988, 61.

An association of members as self-sufficient individuals in a universality which because of their self-sufficiency is only formal (Hegel 1967, 110).

Historically, the earliest concrete embodiment of the integration of these two pillars of modern society can be found in natural law and the positive legal edifice later build upon it. However, it is wrong to assume that subjectivity and universality came into existence ex nihilo, without any roots in the premodern society. In the Judeo-Christian (and Islamic) traditions "man" is created in the image of a true sovereign subject, God. In the Genesis God commands "man" to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth". However, this was a limited subjectivity in that the supreme subject was never the human, but a transcendental and omnipotent God, in whose image and vicariously the human aspired to subjectivity.

In the same vein universality has deep roots in the premodern cosmology. World religions such as Christianity and Islam transformed the basis of social relations from that of blood--tribe in particular--to that of faith--universal.⁶ Probably it is not an accident that the Greek meaning of the Catholic(kata: down, completely + holos:whole) means all-inclusive and universal. But again premodern

⁶ Weber seems to have believed that the expansion of ancient empires also contributed to the growth of universality. "The growth of a world empire in China, the extension of the power of the Brahmin caste throughout all the varied political formations in India, and the development of the Persian and Roman empires favored the rise of both universalism and monotheism, though not always in the same measure and with quite different degrees of success" (Weber 1964, 23).

universality was mitigated by feudal forces, among which the church was a major contributor.

In the modern era, however, subjectivity and universality have a peculiar relationship. While, as I will try to elaborate more later, they are closely connected and complementary, at the same time they can be polar opposites. On the one hand, the subject in order to be a subject needs objects--denial of subjectivity of the others. On the other hand, once humans acquire subjectivity, we all want to have it. This contradiction is probably one of the central aporias of our modern era which has shaped the struggles to objectify "others"--e.g., class exploitation, colonialism, sexual and racial oppression, etc. But at the same time it has also shaped liberation struggles against these.

Descartes: The Beginnings of Modern subjectivity

It was Descartes, among others, who attempted to give human subjectivity its concrete and practical aim--the mathematical/scientific apparatus. Descartes saw human subjectivity modeled after God's subjectivity as the goal of activity ,

If I examine the faculties of memory or imagination, or any others, I discover that in my case each one of these faculties is weak and limited, while in the case of God it is immeasurable. It is only the will, or freedom of choice, which I experience within me to be so great that the idea of any greater faculty is beyond my grasp; so much so that it is above all in the virtue of the will that I understand myself to bear in the same way the image and likeness of God (Meditations, IV, 40; cited in Cascardi 1992, 40).

It was mathematics which crowned all other areas of inquiry which in Descartes scheme enabled the subject to master the world.

Speaking of mathematics Descartes wrote,

We can see how much it [mathematics] excels in utility and simplicity the sciences subordinate to it by the fact that it can deal with all objects of which they have cognizance and many more besides (Descartes 1927, 55).

What Descartes achieved was nothing less than the shattering of the authority of tradition and religious-metaphysical world view. But this very achievement resulted in the loss of the transcendental position provided principally by religion through which a coherent understanding of the world was possible. Descartes, attempted to substitute for this loss another "transcendental" platform from whose point of view, different positions could be coherently assessed, embodied in the modern mathematical/scientific approach (Cascardi 1992, 58). Thus in the work of Descartes one can identify both sides of subjectivity--the subject in the process of emancipating itself, as well as the subject who objectifies the "other," in this instance nature.

But, while Descartes pushed the notion of subjectivity as human will in the direction of objectification of nature and utilitarianism, as we will see below, Kant gave it a direction toward universality.

Kant: Philosopher of Modernity Par Excellence

Kant's ontology and epistemology are closely related as they are mediated by the concept of reason. On the one hand, reason is the ground of human subjectivity as the will. As Kant put it, the priority of the will over existence as the basis of subjectivity is mediated through reason, "the same subject, who is also conscious of himself as thing in himself, considers his own existence as itself determinable only through laws that he gives himself through reason, and in this his existence nothing is antecedent to his determination of his will" (cited in Guyer 1992, 19).

On the other hand, the laws of nature do not inhere in nature; rather they are constructed by the human mind and used in order to understand nature(Reiss 1970, 17).

In this type of ontology/epistemology the human is prior to all forms of knowledge and existence or essence and it is the pivot around which everything revolves. Kant was probably one of the earliest philosophers who explicitly made the human the foundation of knowledge and being. As Paul Guyer has observed, it was through Kant's three critiques that the fundamental principles of science and morality, and one might add aesthetics, such as the form of space and time, came to be viewed as products of human thought alone(Guyer 1992, 11).

Kant's synthesis of ontology and epistemology is expressed in his conception of the transcendental a priori of knowledge. This conception which rejects any "external" criterion of knowledge, be it our own sensory apparatus(empirical data) or given traditions, holds certain a priori "intuitions" as the basis of human knowledge and by

extension precepts for our mode of existence. As Kant has expressed in his first critique,

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them *a priori*, by means of concept, have, on this assumption ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge (cited in Cahoon 1987, 50).

The primacy of the subject in this epistemological/ontological formula in turn translates into the radical notion of the autonomy of the individual acting in the moral/practical sphere. As Kant himself put it, in Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,

Man himself must make or have made himself whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his own free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and could not therefore be morally neither good nor evil (Kant 1960, 40).

It is central to Kant's theory of ethics that normal adults are fully capable of self-government and self-determination in matters of morality (Schneewind 1992, 309). Kant himself recognized the influence of Rousseau in this issue of the moral autonomy of humans. A number of Kant's scholars have observed the crucial influence of Rousseau on this central conception of Kant's system. Among them

Schneewind has observed that for many previous thinkers the metaphor of slavery to our passions had served as a reminder that the only alternative would be to obey the laws of nature or those of God. Rousseau, on the other hand believed that we are capable of making our own laws to lay the foundations of a just and free society. Rousseau had commented that, "the impulse of appetite alone is slavery, and obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself is freedom" (cited in Schneewind 1992, 314). Kant adopted this approach and made it the cornerstone of his moral/practical philosophy (cited in Schneewind 1992, 314).⁷

The Rousseauian Revolution in Kant, as Lewis white Beck, has designated it, elevates the human above the mere executor of moral law, to that of legislator of this law also. It makes him the sovereign with regards to the ends (Beck1988, 21).

Thus in Kant's ethics, rationality is based on a radical notion of human volition. As Charles Taylor has put it, in Kant's view,

Moral life is equivalent to freedom, in this radical sense of self-determination by the moral will. This is called autonomy. Any deviation from it, any determination of the will by some external consideration, some inclination even of the most joyful benevolence; some authority even as high as God himself, is condemned as heteronomy (Taylor 1979, 4-5).

⁷ Lewis White Beck has also observed the crucial influence of Rousseau's notion of freedom on Kant's concept of autonomy: "Here the influence of Rousseau on Kant is comparable to that of Copernicus. We may, indeed, speak of a Rousseauistic Revolution. Rousseau had defined political freedom as obedience to a law which the citizen had given himself, or in whose enactment the citizen had participated"(Beck 1988, 15).

In this formulation by Kant reason and rationality is the embodiment of the autonomous volition of the subject. Again as Taylor expressed, in Kant's analysis, "The numinas which inspired awe was not God as much as the moral law itself, the self-given command of reason" (Taylor 1979, 5).

However, there is immediately a problem with Kant's formulation of the rational as the moral act based solely on the radical autonomy of the free subject. Some measures should be taken to counter the moral "chaos" to which such a radical notion of subjectivity and the potential solipsistic implications may give rise. Thus Kant, proposed to cure this problem by combining the notion of subjectivity with the principle of universality (Taylor 1979, 75).

Kant again invoked the notion of the transcendental a priori as the ontological/epistemological basis of the combining of the principle of subjectivity with that of universality. By the term "transcendental" Kant meant anything that is the ground for a priori knowledge; the most basic and elemental intuition which is not grounded in any empirical, experiential or otherwise produced data. Kant believed that the very conditions of our existence force us to recognize the combination of subjectivity as freedom and its universalizability, a fact which was negatively epitomized in the concept of right,

The concept of right should be seen as consisting immediately of the possibility of universal reciprocal coercion being combined with the freedom of everyone.

And,

Reason has taken care that the understanding is as fully equipped as possible with a priori intuitions for the concept of right (Kant 1970, 134-5).

For Kant the combination of the subjective freedom and its universalizability were in reality inseparable from each other and embedded in our intuitive knowledge stemming from our conditions of being. He expressed this, using the example of the universal prohibition on lying, as follows,

This [Thou shalt not lie, be the circumstances what they may], if I look into my free will, expresses the consistency of my free will with itself and with that of others; it is necessary law of the free will. Such principles, which are universal, constant and necessary, have their source in pure reason; they cannot be derived from experience. Every ethical law expresses a categorical necessity, not drawn from experience (Kant 1930, 13).

After laying the epistemological foundations for the combination of the principles of subjectivity and universality as a transcendental a priori, Kant introduces the concept of the "categorical imperative" as the manifestation of the combination at the deontological level. In fact, Kant distinguished three different types of "imperatives". First, what he called the "problematic" or "hypothetical" imperative. In this type one ought to do a certain act if one wills a certain end (Schneewind 1992, 319). Moreover, in this type of imperative, the end is given and the means are chosen appropriately in accordance with the latter (Kant 1930, 4). The second type of

imperative, Kant calls the "prudential imperative" or "pragmatic imperative". As he put it, "prudence is the ability to use the means towards the universal end of man, that is, happiness" and, "rules of prudence require us both to define the end and the means to be used to attain it" (Kant 1930, 4).

The third imperative is the more famous categorical imperative which has been associated with the Kantian ethics. It is my contention here that through this categorical imperative, Kant attempted to achieve a "general" combination of the two principles of subjectivity and universality. On the one hand, he described the categorical imperative in terms of free will associated with subjective autonomy regardless of any given telos or consequence:

It is the characteristics of the moral [i.e., categorical] imperative that it does not determine an end, and action is not governed by an end, but follow from the free will and has no regard to ends. The dictates of moral imperative are absolute and regardless of the end. Our free doing and refraining has an inner goodness, irrespective of its ends(Kant 1930, 5).

On the other hand, the categorical imperative is defined by the criterion of universalizability:

in all moral judgements the idea which we frame is this, 'what is the character of action taken by itself.' If the intent of the action can without self-contradiction be universalized, it is morally possible; if it cannot be so universalized without contradicting itself, it is morally impossible(Kant 1930, 44).

Thus categorical imperative, can be summarized as: one ought to act only according to the maxim through which one can act at the same time that it should become a universal law (Schneewind 1992, 320). In this summary we can see that any act is permissible (freedom of subjectivity), on the condition that, and only on that condition, that it can become universalized.

Kant's attempt at the combination of subjectivity and universality found social and political embodiment in his conception of right. He defined rights as, "The totality of conditions, under which the will[wilkur] of one person can be unified with the will of another under a universal law of freedom" (Kresting 1992, 344). As it is readily observable in this passage, the concept of right consists of the conditions under which freedom of every subject can coexists with the freedom of all other subjects. Kant's formulation of the concept of right in this way entails certain very important legal and ethical implications and corollaries. First, it implies the ethical exhortation and legal requirement that each person should be treated as an autonomous subject and as an end:"Act always so that you treat humanity whether in your person or in that or another always as an end, but never as a means only" (Reiss 1970, 18).⁸ Second, it entails that the freedom of each individual should be restricted so that it can be harmonized with the freedom of every one else. This in turn entails a concept of public right, embedded in a general and external law guaranteeing freedom, which makes this constant harmony possible (Kant 1970, 73). Third, the modern law

⁸ In this passage one can see one of the few occasions where the domains of morality and law actually converge in modernity.

arises as a corollary to this conception of right. As J.B. Schreewind has observed, "The domain of law which extends to civil law, arises from maxims that are vetoed because they cannot even be thought coherently when universalized. The rejection of such maxims turns out to provide a counterpart to the recognition of the strict rights of others" (Schneewind 1992, 323).⁹

Following the above conceptualization of law, Kant raises the question of the necessity of a civil constitution in which such a contractual view of law can be embedded. Since the relation of equal and free subjects involves restrictions of freedom and thereby coercion, therefore, a civil constitution which is "a relationship among free men who are subject to coercive law while they retain their freedom within the general union with their fellows," becomes necessary (Kant 1970, 73). Thus Kant recommends the establishment of a political constitution where universalized subjectivity is made possible,

A constitution allowing the greatest possible human freedom in accordance with laws which ensure that in freedom of each can co-exist with the freedom of all others (not one designed to provide the greatest possible happiness, as this will in any case follow automatically) is at all events a necessary idea which must be made the basis not only of the first outline of a political constitution but of all laws as well (Kant 1970, 191; emphasis original).

⁹ The moral sphere, on the other hand, involves actions which could be imagined as universalizable but not required by any force. See Schneewind 1992, for a good discussion of the Kantian distinction between the "domain of law" and the "domain of virtue."

According to Kant the ideal constitution is to be found in a republic-- "the only rightful constitution, that of a republic" (Kant 1970, 163). Moreover, Kant considered the notion of a public sphere, based on the critical judgement of all social actors, a crucial counterpart to a republican constitution(Rundell 1987, 5). The public sphere for Kant consisted of an independent space outside the direct influence and power of the state where the actors can take part in a political society and where there is a rational dialogue among those subjects(Rundell 1987, 28). These two, the (republican)constitution and the public sphere, as components of the civil society, were mechanism whereby the civil society maintained its independence from the state. It follows that political participation is a crucial element in Kant's political theory. The critical subject can only realize her/his autonomy through active participation in a civil state(Rundell 1987, 25). As we will shortly see, Kant imposed certain, and by today's standards debilitating, restrictions on the notion of democratic political participation, but as Rundell has observed, "Despite his suspicions toward democracy, Kant generates a model of a democratic social form that is guided by the notions of universal participation and critical judgement (Rundell 1987,30).¹⁰

Organizationally, Kant considered the separation of powers necessary for the realization of subjects' autonomy as rights of citizenship,

¹⁰ The notions of universal participation and critical judgment, which arise in modernity are fundamental in any political formation which has any claim to any form of democracy. In the following chapters I will dicuss their relevance to the thoughts of Khomeini and Shariati.

Every state contains three powers, i.e. the universally united will is made up of three separate persons (Trias Politica). These are the ruling power (or sovereignty) in the person of the legislator, the executive power in the person of the individual who governs in accordance with the law, and the judicial power (which allots to everyone what is his by law) in the person of the judge [potestas legislatocia, rectocia et iudiearia] (Kant 1970, 138).

These organizational discussions may seem trivial because of their relatively long history in the West and thereby being taken for granted. But because of their connections to the two pillars of modernity, i.e., subjectivity and universality, and their foundations being laid there, they are of utmost importance. In this regard the legislative power has a particularly important function for Kant. The power to legislate can belong only to the united will of the people. Since all rights are supposed to emanate from this power, the laws it gives must be, "absolutely incapable of doing anyone an injustice". Thus only the combined and unanimous will of every one, whereby each decides the same for the collective and the collective decides the same for each (i.e., "the general and united will of the people"), is allowed to legislate (Kant 1970, 139).

Kant calls the members of such a civil society citizens and endows them with three inalienable rights. First, the right to obey no law other than what themselves have given consent; secondly the right to equality; and thirdly civil independence whereby citizens are allowed to owe their existence and sustenance to no one except to their own rights and powers as members of their commonwealth

(Kant 1970, 139). Finally, in order to guarantee these citizenship rights and freedoms Kant advanced freedom of expression, which is part and parcel of a public discourse, as "freedom of the pen" (Kant 1970, 85).

Despite Kant's enormous contribution to the creation of a democratic tradition as civil society, he restricted membership to certain groups of people. First, he categorically excluded women from citizenship (Kant 1970, 78). The second criterion for citizenship, according to Kant, is that one, "must be his own master(*sui iuris*) and must have some property (which can include any skill, fine art or science) to support himself" (Kant 1970, 78). In this way, Kant excluded whole categories of people, such as laborers, the shop assistants, the domestic servants, taylors, etc., from citizenship rights (Kant 1970, 78). These are vast numbers of people, who even in the industrialized countries of today's world constitute the majority of the population. The reason why Kant excluded these categories from rights of citizenship, it seems, is that as I mentioned above, he considered the three principles of freedom, equality and independence, as indispensable for the operation of a civil society. The first two principle, freedom and equality, according to his entire theory, as I have tried to outline above, are given *a priori*. But the last principle, i.e., independence, is not given *so* and is rather acquired. As it has been my intention to show, Kant's theoretical constructions so far are extremely coherent, and based upon his ontological/epistemological foundations of his transcendental philosophy. In other words, everything follows, given the premises of the apriority of the universalized subjectivity. The exception is

this principle of independence, which, to say the least, undermines any claims to universality.

However, on the theoretical level, the independence criterion, may be interpreted as a warning and an allusion to the fact that in a society whose members lack a certain level of "independence" such as literacy, technical skill and education, the principles of freedom and equality cannot take root. This interpretation gives credence to the argument that social and economic developments are necessary counterparts and complimentary to cultural and political developments. Moreover, Kant's independence criterion might be read as a foresight that citizenship, (i.e., freedom of subjectivity universalized) is a right to be acquired and not something which can be granted from above. Those social experiments, especially in postrevolutionary situations, where an elite attempts to force equality among the populace paternalistically and from above, have usually failed and hindered universalized subjectivity.

In contrast to, and despite his narrowing of, the scope of the "domestic" citizenship, Kant's views of international relations is quite broad and open. His visions for moral, intellectual and political development are not confined to any particular nation or region. In the essay, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," he develops a utopian scheme for an egalitarian international relations. In a statement which might be read as reminiscent of Hobbes, but which in really it is not, Kant remarked that,

The same unsociability which forced men to do so [form a commonwealth], gives rise in turn to a situation whereby each commonwealth in its external

relation... is in a position of unrestricted freedom. Each must accordingly expect from any other precisely the same evils which formerly oppressed individual men and forced them into a law-governed civil state. Wars, tense and unremitting military preparations... are the means by which nature drives nations... [toward] ... abandoning a lawless state or savagery and entering a federation of peoples in which every state, even the smallest, could expect to derive its security and rights not from its own power or its own legal judgement, but solely from this great federation (Kant 1970, 47).

Here again Kant demonstrates his consistency and the coherence of his ethico-political system. The same motivations which drives the subjects within a social formation toward inter-subjectivity, should drive toward an equitable international relations.¹¹

A corollary of this formulation by Kant, is found in his anti-colonial and anti-imperialist position. He condemned the Europeans for considering, American, African and other non-European countries "ownerless territories" and subjugating them by conquest and colonialization (Kant 1970, 106-107). In an era where the ugly side of subjectivity-- i.e., domination-- was the prevalent side of the relationship of the Europeans with non-Europeans, this anti-colonial position of Kant, which is consistent with the rest of his thoughts, is commendable.

¹¹ How much of these ideals are achieved in the "real world" is beyond the scope of this discussion. I only suffice to saying that a desire for these ideals exist for many and that in itself is important, even though not sufficient by any means .

The formulations by Kant outlined in this section, starting from ontology and epistemology and extending to an ethical system and a political theory, constitute the highest achievements of the Enlightenment philosophy and make Kant the philosopher of modernity par excellence. But, his thoughts have ever since been the target of criticism from different quarters. The most salient feature of Kant's system might be described as its "non-teleological" and "non-consequential" character. In Kant's ethics value is not to be found in any pre-desired end, nor does it consider any specific action, such as telling the truth, as intrinsically right or valuable (Beck 1988, 15). As Kant himself said it eloquently,

The object or aim of the will can be or any kind what so ever (even including happiness). But in this case, we completely abstract from whatever particular end is adopted. Thus so far as the principle of morality is concerned, the doctrine of the highest good as the ultimate end of a will which is determined by this doctrine and which conforms to its laws can be bypassed and set aside as incidental (Kant 1970, 66).

In this way Kant rejects all ethical systems not based on human will, be their origin in our senses and instincts or in "outer grounds", i.e., custom and received law (Kant 1930, 12). He also dismisses any ethics derived from religion. These make Kant's system vulnerable to charges of formality, abstractness and vacuity or emptiness.

As I have been trying to demonstrate, Kant attempted to create a combination between subjectivity and universality, but since this combination is modeled on the radical notion of subjective autonomy,

it has ever since been attacked for its alleged formalism. One should not try to dismiss these allegations as irrelevant and baseless, and as we will see later, they constitute the core of the discontents of modernity. Kant himself, probably felt some of the problems of the ethico-cultural structure of the emerging modern world. Thus he recognized the need for a religion to give "weight" to morality: "without religion, obligation is motiveless. Religion supplies the condition under which the binding force of the laws can be thought" (Kant 1930, 82). He even identified the problem of vacuity specifically and directly: "moral laws can be right without a third being, but in the absence of such a being to make their performance necessary they would be empty" (Kant 1930, 40). These qualifications on the part of Kant, are completely external to his system, which as we saw is based on the transcendental a priori. But they point out the ethico-cultural problems of modernity, to which many thinkers, first and probably foremost among them Hegel, responded. It is with this backdrop in mind, that I turn to a discussion of Hegel's attempt at a substantive synthesis of subjectivity and universality.

Hegel: The Grand Synthesis

The critique of Kant's type of combination of subjectivity and universality was a prominent feature of Hegel's philosophy.¹² Hegel criticized Kant for "reducing" the concept of the right to "the limitation of my freedom or arbitrary will in such a way that it may

¹² On the issue of Hegel's critique of Kant see, for example, Benhabib(1986), especially chapter 3.

coexist with the arbitrary will of everyone else in accordance with a universal law (Hegel 1991, 58). In Hegel's view, the problem with this definition of right is that first it is negative. i.e. it is based on a limitation of freedom and secondly that it is formal (Hegel 1991, 58). By the latter Hegel means that the will involved in the Kantian formulation is that of mere human and ephemeral type not that of what Hegel considered to be the true will, that of the infinite spirit.¹³

The same criticism, in Hegel's view, applies to Kant's concept of categorical imperative: "Kant's further formulation, the possibility of visualizing an action as a universal maxim does not lead to the more concrete visualization of a situation, but in itself contains no principle beyond abstract identity and the "absence of contradiction" already mentioned" (Hegel 1967, 90). In the civil society, as the embodiment of the Kantian combination, the same problem of vacuity is prevalent, because both the principles of subjectivity and universality lack "substance":

In civil society the Idea is lost in particularity and has fallen asunder with the separation of inward and outward. In the administration of justice, however, civil society returns to its concept, to the unity of the implicit universal with subjective particular, although here the latter is only that present in single cases and the universality in question is that of abstract right (Hegel 1967, 145; emphasis added).

¹³ More on this "spirit" when I discuss Hegel's ontology.

Hegel's critique of the vacuity of the Kantian view of modern civil society went as far as viewing the withdrawal of the essence of religion from the civil society as another aspect of its abstractness. To be certain, Hegel's view of religion was far from that of the orthodoxy and he advocated the separation of the church and the state. But he believed that divorce of the political institutions from the "realm of inwardness" and from the "innermost shrine of conscience" as well as from the sanctuary of religion, has caused these institutions to be indeterminate, abstract and "lack any real center" (Hegel 1975, 104).

To understand Hegel's problematic better we need to turn to a discussion of the intellectual and "political" milieu of Hegel's time and his immediate predecessors. Charles Taylor's book, Hegel and Modern Society is invaluable in placing Hegel's project in its proper historical setting and shedding much light on the intellectual ambiance of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries which still has much relevance to our period.¹⁴ As Taylor has pointed out, in the late eighteenth century Germany there were two reactions to the mainstream of Enlightenment thought. One was the romantic throwback which was loosely associated with the *Sturm und Drang* movement and the other was the system of thought build around the idea of a radical freedom of which, Immanuel Kant was the main figure (Taylor 1979, 1-3). The main thrust of the romantic critique of the Enlightenment revolved around the latter's view of the human as the "subject of egoistic desires, for which nature and society

¹⁴ In my understanding of Hegel's work in general and his project for modernity in particular, I am much indebted to Charles Taylor's works on Hegel and I have extensively drawn on them.

provided merely the means to fulfillment" (Taylor 1979, 1). The romantics, thus charged the Enlightenment philosophy as being utilitarian in its ethics, atomistic with regard to social philosophy, analytical in its view of man and with a social engineering outlook to merely adjust interpersonal relations (Taylor 1979, 1). To counter such a philosophy, the Romantics, of which Herder was the most prominent, proposed a view of man which Taylor, following Isaiah Berlin, has described as "expressive unity (Taylor 1979, 1-2). According to this view human life should be seen in a rather Gestalt fashion, just like a work of art where there is an organic relation between all the constituent parts and aspects (Taylor 1979, 1-2). The greatest problem of the mainstream Enlightenment view of man, according to the Romantic perspective, was its "analytical" approach. There was a break down of everything into smaller parts and separating the components of the whole. Reason and sensibility, soul and body, reason and feeling were torn asunder in this modern view of man. The separation and breakdown also applied to the relation between the human individual and society and nature (Taylor 1979, 1-2).

The Kantian idea of radical freedom, on the other hand, as we have seen, objected to the objectification of human from any source, within or without. Kant saw that the determination of the human will whether coming from an "analytical science of man" or from our desires and inclinations as wrong. Thus Kant formulated his whole system based on this radical notion of the autonomy of the subject as we saw in the previous section.

But from the vantage point of the Romantics, this radical view of freedom was possible only at the cost of a "direnction with nature" and a division within the human between her reason and sensibility which was even deeper than the one caused by the utilitarian and materialist philosophy of the Enlightenment (Taylor 1979, 6).

Partly as a result of the French Revolution and the promise of subjective radical freedom that it offered to the German intellectuals of the early nineteenth century and the fear of the Terror which was perceived as a political echo of the diremption from nature and the larger order, including the pre-modern social order, there was a strong appeal for these two ideas of "radical autonomy" and "expressive unity" in Germany (Taylor 1979, 6). Consequently, the aspiration of this generation of German intellectuals was to create a unity between the two ideals of radical freedom and expressive unity (Taylor 1979, 6).

Hegel was among the heirs to the generation who wanted to achieve the synthesis between subjectivity as radical freedom and unity with the larger natural order, and undoubtedly the most prominent among them. In the previous section we saw Kant's attempt to combine subjectivity and universality. In the case of Hegel the attempt was a "synthesis"-- a unification in which the formality of Kant's combination is to be overcome, and a synthesis on a much grander scale. It was on a much grander scale in the sense that the second term of the synthesis, "universality," was not confined to a mere sociological understanding of it. Rather, this universality included concepts such as nature--inner and outer

nature--in addition to the social collectivity.¹⁵ The concept of synthesis for Hegel meant that its two terms, freedom of subjectivity and universality in its expanded sense, would be "reconciled" in a new unification, without each of terms losing any of its character and without one overpowering the other. This was a task which appears to be impossible, since the two terms are, at least in some respects, opposite. But Hegel thought otherwise and his ontology, which may look peculiar to many of us now, was designed to achieve this task as we will see.

Hegel appreciated the freedom of subjectivity. He maintained that while property is of "external nature" and therefore alienable, freedom is constitutive of the self and as such inalienable (Hegel 1993, 95). Hegel considered the forfeiture of freedom of subjectivity as "alienation of personality" which is exemplified in slavery, serfdom, disqualification from owning property and restrictions of freedom of ownership (Hegel 1993, 95). Furthermore, what he called "return to self" (or the reversal of alienation) involved the restoration of freedom to the subject with regard to her "capacity for rights", ethical life and religious beliefs (Hegel 1993, 95).

The freedom of subjectivity, in Hegel's view was one of the goals of history according to his philosophy of history: "World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom ... a progress whose necessity it is our business to comprehend" (Hegel 1975, 54). Hegel's concept of freedom was not in any way abstract as its realization was

¹⁵ As we will see, this relation between the subject and three spheres of the outer nature and inner nature, constitutes an essential core of the works of many thinkers following Hegel, including critical theorists. It also has close bearings on Habermas's three value spheres of cognitive/instrumental, moral/practical and aesthetic/expressive.

very concrete. It was the realization of the freedom of the human: "the ultimate phase of its [spirit's] consciousness, on which everything depends is the recognition that man is free" (Hegel 1975, 52).

The important position that the concept and phenomenon of freedom occupied in Hegel's formulations can be understood when we realize that he defined reason in terms of freedom. As he put it, reason "is directly conceived with the consciousness of the concept of freedom, and the way in which it expresses itself in individuals" (Hegel 1975, 143). In fact, the relation between thought and freedom have a significant place in Hegel's system. It is probably not too far fetched to claim that the very lynchpin of Hegel's theory is that "intelligence" is the very basis of freedom and hence only an intelligent being can be free and that an intelligent being is necessarily free,

Since man alone--as distinct from animals-- is a thinking being, he alone possesses freedom, and he possesses it solely by virtue of his ability to think (Hegel 1975, 144).

In a passage reminiscent of Descartes--although Hegel's project was very different from that of Descartes and in fact it was to bridge the Cartesian dualism--Hegel refers to the grounding of the subject as "knower" and "willer" in a view of the subject as a "thinker": "If we consider subjectivity itself, we find that subjective knowledge and volition are the same thing as thought" (Hegel 1975, 104). Hegel himself arrived at the logical conclusion of grounding freedom in

intelligence by declaring the mind as the very basis of right (Hegel 1967, 20).

In an argument which seems to be directed, on the one hand at Kant, and on the other hand, at the Romantics, Hegel upholds the importance of thought in his synthesis,

The good is in principle the essence of the will in its substantiality and universality, i.e., of the will in its truth and therefore it exists simply and solely in thinking and by means of thinking. Hence assertions such as "man cannot know the truth but has to do only with phenomena" or 'thinking injures the good will' are dogmas depriving mind not only of intellectual but also of all ethical worth and dignity (Hegel 1967, 132).

The importance of the emphasis that Hegel placed on reason lies in the fact that, as we saw above, the Romantics' solution to rectifying of the diremption caused by the modernity of the Enlightenment, was to be achieved through a unification with the cosmic order, but at the price of sacrificing the freedom of subjectivity which was based on reason. Since Hegel's project was all about the "preservation" of subjectivity while reconciling it with the "lost" cosmic order, his emphasis on thought as the foundation of subjectivity was vital (Taylor 1979, 48).

While Hegel believed that the grounding of the freedom of subjectivity was in thought, he posited that the manifestation of that freedom was in the will. In his parlance, what was necessary to bring that which exists only in itself as mere potentiality into existence and actually was the will, defined here as "the activity of

mankind in the world at large" (Hegel 1975, 69-70). However, this "human will" was based on a higher level of abstraction: "the abstract concept of the Idea of the will is in general the free will which wills the free will" (Hegel 1991, 57; emphasis original). Here in connection with the issue of right, Hegel takes issue with Kant and Rousseau whom Hegel accuses of "reducing" the essence of will, which properly belongs to the "Cosmic Geist," to that of the human individual,

The definition of right in question embodies the view, especially prevalent since Rousseau according to which the substantial basis and primary factor is supposed to be not the will as rational will which has being in and for itself or the spirit as true spirit, but will and spirit as the particular individual, as the will of the single person [des Einzelnen] in his distinctive arbitrariness (Hegel 1991, 58; emphasis original).

In order to better understand what Hegel meant by this concept of spirit of Geist we need to examine some aspects of his ontology. As we saw before, and as analyzed by Charles Taylor, Hegel was an heir to the generation of German intellectuals who saw the dilemma of choosing between reason and radical autonomy of modernity on the one hand and being a part of nature on the other hand. Hegel belongs to the group who believed that these were not mutually exclusive and therefore a synthesis would be possible. Thus at the basis of his ontology Hegel maintained that there was a simultaneous opposition and unity (a dialectical and not a Cartesian separation of duality) between thought and life, reason (freedom) and nature. In

other words, in order to be at all as conscious being, the subject must be embodied in life; but in order to realize the perfection of consciousness it must fight and overcome the natural bent of life as a limit (Taylor 1979, 21). This dialectic constituted the "motor" of history. First, separating us from the cosmic order and nature and later causing a new reunion with this cosmic order. In order to achieve this great unification Hegel conceived nature of having some kind of foundation in spirit (Taylor 1979, 9). The reasoning behind this was that if the most important aspect of our existence, our morality as radical freedom, was to be in harmony with our natural being, then nature itself had to have a spiritual tendency (Taylor 1979, 9). Hegel found this spiritual tendency in the concept of *Geist*, which as the cosmic spirit was that which underlies all reality, or as Spinoza had called it the "Substance," or what the proponents of the *Sturm und Drang* perceived as the divine life which flows in everything (Taylor 1979, 23).

Now, the essence of this spirit was freedom or rationality; hence the use of the term "mind" interchangeably by Hegel. Furthermore, this spirit "posited" the world and thus embodied it and we as humans are the vehicles of this cosmic spirit in its bodily embodiment as it comes to self-consciousness.

In this way Hegel's ontology attempted to make a synthesis between the two categories of radical freedom and being a part of the natural order. With the aid of the concept of *Geist*, Hegel attempted to resolve the dilemma that none of his contemporaries resolved. As Taylor has explained eloquently,

Hegel solves the problem of uniting the finite to infinite spirit without loss of freedom through his notion of reason ...[N]one of Hegel's Romantic contemporaries resolves this dilemma. Either they held to vision of an unboundedly free creative subject, but at the cost of exile in a God forsaken world; or they sought unity with the divine beyond, but at the cost of abandoning their autonomy to a larger order beyond their comprehension. For Hegel too the finite subject must be part of a larger order. But since this is an order deployed by an unconditional rational necessity, it is at no point foreign to ourselves as rational subjects. Nothing in it must be accepted as brute 'positive' fact. The rational agent loses none of his freedom in coming to accept his vocation as vehicle of cosmic necessity (Taylor 1975, 17).

Thus Hegel achieves his synthesis which in his estimate does not suffer from formality and is substantial since the freedom involved here is not that of the mere human individual but rather belongs to the more substantial Cosmic Geist.

To be certain, in today's sensibility Hegel's concept of Geist seems phantasmagorical and chimerical, but its purpose was to reconcile the principle of subjectivity, as well as the individual subject, with at least three sphere within the concept of the universal. These three spheres were what we would now call the inner nature, the outer nature, and the community. The human in her original state was enmeshed in nature, whether in our own instincts or that of the external nature. The human had to oppose nature as a free agent to realize our freedom. But, in Hegel's ontology as the vehicles of the Geist, we no longer have to stay in a state of alienation from the

inner or the outer nature and yet we can preserve our freedom and rationality and not go back to the original state of being enmeshed in nature because the *Geist* itself is made of freedom and rationality (Taylor 1979, 50-51).¹⁶

While Hegel's attempt at reconciliation between the subject and the inner and outer nature are of utmost importance and relevance to us in the last decade of the twentieth century, it is the third moment of this reconciliation, that between the individual subject and the universal of social collectivity, that I will try to elaborate here. This moment of the reunification was sufficiently important for Hegel since his *Philosophy of Right* is basically concerned with the reconciliation between the subject as the individual and the society as the universal.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel explicitly identifies the social collective as a universal (Hegel 1975, 60). The general synthesis between the finite and infinite in the special case of the individual and the social collectivity here takes the shape of universalized subjectivity. In this famous passage Hegel historicizes the evolution of universalized subjectivity,

¹⁶ In our age one might think this reconciliation between the subject and inner nature has taken place through psychoanalysis, sparing the fantastic aspects of the notion of *Geist* while retaining its theopretical substance in Freudian theory. Furthermore, the social phenomenon associated with certain aspects of the sexual revolution of the sixties and the movement built around the human body, such as one's control and choice over one's body may be considered as a real reconciliation between freedom and inner nature, especially since in those phenomena both factors of freedom as choice and our bodies as the embodiment of our inner nature are equally preserved. In a similar vein, some strands of the contemporary environmental movement, the one's which preserve the principle of human subjectivity while trying to reconcile it to a broader order, may be considered as an attempt at the reunification between the subject and the outer nature without resorting to the concept of "Cosmic Spirit".

The Orientals knew only that **One** is free ... the Greek and Roman worldknew that **Some** are free, and finally, our own knowledge that **All** men as such are free, and that man is by **nature** free (Hegel 1975, 54-5; **emphases original**).

This sociology of Hegel has its roots in his ontology of the **Geist** whose substance is freedom,

The substance of the spirit is freedom. From this, we can infer that its end in the historical process is the freedom of subject to follow its own conscience and morality and to pursue and implement its own universal ends; it also implies that the subject has infinite value and that it must become conscious of its supremacy. the end of the world spirit is realized in substance through the freedom of each individual (Hegel 1975, 55).

However, the problem with the *de facto* combination of subjectivity and universality in the reality of the civil society as we saw before, is that this combination is only formal and vacuous and therefore is not a genuine substantive synthesis. In the following passage Hegel's sociology locates the relations between the individual and the collectivity as a universalized subjectivity which is only formal in the civil society,

The concrete person who, as a particular person, as a totality of needs and a mixture of natural necessity and arbitrariness, is his own end, is one principle of civil society. But this particular person stands

essentially in relation[Beziehung] to other similar particulars, and their relation is such that each asserts itself and gains satisfaction through the others, and this at the same time through the exclusive mediation of the form* of universality, which is the second principle (Hegel 1991, 220; *emphasis added, other emphasis original).

In this passage it is crucial to realize that Hegel is here alluding to the formality of the universality in the phrase "form of universality" found in the civil society. To be sure, Hegel believes that particular interests of the individual subject should be respected, but harmonized with the universal: "Particular interests should certainly not be set aside, let alone suppressed; on the contrary they should be harmonized with universal, so that both they themselves and the universal are preserved" (Hegel 1991, 285).

However, the kind of combination of these two principles as found in the civil society is severely inadequate because in it the principle of universality is based on an abstract notion of right (Hegel 1967, 145).

Hegel attributed the abstraction of universal in the civil society to the nature of contract as its modus operandi, "where the universal is reduced by the particular will to a mere semblance, and in the case of contract, is reduced in the first place to a purely external community of wills. This constitutes deception" (Hegel 1991, 118).¹⁷

¹⁷ Hegel lodged another criticism at civil society because of its weakening of the family, "but civil society tears the individual from his family ties, estranges the members of the family from one another, and recognizes them as self-subsistent personsThus the individual becomes a son of civil society ..." (Hegel 1991, 148).

Hegel's criticism of the emptiness of the universality of the civil society here is pointed at its contractual nature. He believed that mere contract could be no basis of a society, whether it be a contract of all with all or a contract between all and sovereign or the government (Hegel 1991, 105). He went as far as holding the vacuity of the contractual nature of universality in civil society responsible for the Terror in the French Revolution (Hegel 1967, 157).

Hegel's solution to the problem of the emptiness of the combination of subjectivity and universality based on contract in civil society was the concept of *sittlichkeit* or what has been rendered as "ethical life". This "ethical life" constituted for Hegel the substantial synthesis of the freedom of the individual subjectivity and the social universal. It is in this synthesis where Hegel attempts to preserve the "right" of the individual subjectivity with that of the collective universal, which, as we saw, is based on the ontology of the Geist. To be sure, this "identity" of the subjective particularity and collective universality is of the dialectical type, where identity and opposition come together,

The right of the subject's particularity, his right to be satisfied, or in other words the right of subjective freedom, is the pivot and center of the difference between antiquity and modern times.Now this principle of particularity is, to be sure, one moment of the antithesis, and in the first place at least it is just as much identical with the universal as distinct from it (Hegel 1967, 84).¹⁸

¹⁸ It is in the same paragraph that Hegel identifies his concept of "morality" which pitted the individual against the social norms. Continuing the same passage, Hegel says, "Abstract reflection, however, fixes this moment [i.e.,

Thus Hegel tried to achieve the reunification of the individual with the larger order, which in this case is the social order, where the larger order is the very basis of its substantiality which lacks in the civil society. As he put it, "thus ethical life is the unity of the will in its concept and the will of the individual[des Einzelnen], that is of the subject" (Hegel 1991, 64).

The thrust of Hegel's philosophy here is directed to the attempt to heal the diremption between the individual and the society in modern society without sacrificing either of them. In the premodern society, especially that of the ancient Greeks the individual had found his identification with the public life and the common experience but this freedom of subjectivity was limited in its scope and confined to few men (Taylor 1979, 92). In the modern society, on the other hand the freedom of individual subject has pitted the individual against collective and public life and its institution, hence the "alienation" of the individual (Taylor 1979,125).

Now, Hegel thought that ethical life was embodied in the state. Here by state Hegel means the larger sense of the term, as the larger society in general and its institutions. After the initial unity between individual and the collectivity--i.e., the stage of "family"-- and next the diremption of individual and the society in the civil society, the third stage of the "state" is ushered,

principle of particularity] in its distinction from and opposition to the universal and so produces a view of morality as nothing but a bitter, unending, struggle against self-satisfaction, as the command 'do with abhorrence what duty enjoin.' "(Hegel 1967, 84)

But the state emerges only at the third stage, that of ethical life and spirit, at which the momentous unification of self-sufficient individuality with universal substantiality takes place (Hegel 1991, 64).¹⁹

There has been much debate and controversy about the nature of the concept of state in Hegel's formulations. I have no intention of entering into this debate, but I believe there is much in his writings to indicate two things about the nature of state in Hegel. One is that he means by the state something more than the political institution we call the state today (Pelczynski 1984, 11). Secondly, there are many characteristics articulated by Hegel which make his concept of state qualified as a democratic state.

Hegel uses the term 'public authority" to describe what we now call the state. He calls on this public authority for taking care of the welfare needs of the needy individuals in the civil society. To be sure the state in the narrower sense of the term is included in its broader sense as the totality of the social collective (Hegel 1975, 96). But even this state *qua* community should not dominate the citizens, nor the citizens ought treat the state as a means to their ends, as is the case in the civil society(Hegel 1975, 95).

The state should not be confused with civil society, Hegel warns. The state is not the apparatus for the mere protection of property and personal freedom, as civil society is. Thus its membership is not

¹⁹ Hegel expressed the same view somewhat differently: "this essential being, the unity of subjective will and the universal, is the ethical whole, and its concrete manifestation is the state. The state is the reality within which the individual has and enjoys his freedom, but only in so far as he knows, believes in and wills the universal (Lectures, 93; emphasis original).

optional (Hegel 1967, 156).²⁰ But although a structure of command and obedience is necessary for the conduct of affairs of society there should be a constitution which would require a minimum of obedience from the citizens and allows the minimum of arbitrariness to those in positions of command. Moreover, the contents of these commands should be determined by the people, by the will of the many or all of the citizens (Hegel 1975, 116-117). Hegel even advocated a parliamentary system to mediate between the individual citizens on the one hand and the monarch, on the other (Hegel 1967, 363). To be sure, this parliamentary system leaned more toward the Estate system, rather than what we know today as a parliamentary system. But nevertheless the Estate was a moment of the legislator (Hegel 1967, 195).²¹

As we noticed, in the state the will of the particular individual and the universal are united. This unification in the moral/practical sphere translates into a complementary relations of right and duty,

In the state, as something ethical, as the inner penetration of the substantive and the particular, my obligation to what is substantive is at the same time the embodiment of my particular freedom. This means that in the state duty and right united in one and the same relation (Hegel 1967, 161).²²

²⁰ This characterization of the state as not being optional is another way of expressing the substantial nature of the state. In *Philosophy of Right* Hegel refers to substantiality of the state in terms of its right to claim over the lives and property of the citizens and require their sacrifice (Hegel 1967, 126).

²¹ Hegel's method for choosing the deputies was not through popular elections, rather they should be selected as representatives through the corporations. See *Philosophy of Right* # 311.

²² One of the perils of the modern society seems to be the attitude which views rights as the sole constituent of the social relations and duties as cumbersome limitations on the freedom of the individual.

Yet, another aspect of the unity of the particular subjectivity and the universal in Hegel's formulations about the state is his conception of the law. This conception of the law in modern society is the means by which the individual relates to the collectivity without surrendering his/her individuality to the latter (Hegel 1975, 100-101). Since the individual by obeying the laws of this society, "knows that he owes his freedom to this obedience", he/she enjoys a position of independence within the state, while being in harmony with the general will of that society (Hegel 1975, 100).

So far in this section I have spoken of the category of universality as a core constituent of Hegel's philosophy. But this should not make us think that Hegel was not aware of a major problem which stems from universality and general will, namely the problem of homogeneity and identification. Indeed, in the age of "mass society" one of the major problems of a social theory working with any form of the concept of "universality" is the issue of homogenization and identification. Hegel found the solution to this problem in the institution of the Estates, where different social groupings could provide differentiation in the larger state (community) and create an organic type of articulation of these different social groups within which in turn could lead to a mediation between these partial groups on the one hand and the government on the other hand (Hegel 1967, 195-199). To be sure, Hegel's solution with our late twentieth century standards is considered far from democratic. Yet the issue of homogeneity and identification in modern society, where as a result of universal subjectivity, all the differentiation of traditional society

tends to disappear (even though this process of disappearance might be very slow) remains.²³

Another potential problem associated with Hegel's concept of the "state" is the balance between the two principles of subjectivity and universality. In some places Hegel comes across as if considering the society as the essence and its citizens as its mere accidents (Inwood, 1984, 40). However, in other occasions the essence of his synthesis comes alive and he strikes a balance between subjectivity and universality,

The state does not exist for the sake of the citizens; it might rather be said that the state is their end, and the citizens are its instruments. But this relation of end and means is not at all appropriate in the present context. For the state is not an abstraction which stands in opposition to citizens; on the contrary, they are distinct moments like those of organic life, in which no one member is either means or end. The divine principle in the state is the Idea made manifest on earth (Hegel 1975, 94-95).

In Philosophy of Right Hegel criticized Plato for denying the right of the individual, or the principle of subjectivity in the Republic (Hegel 1967, 124). In a similar vein, he charges the "primitive" state with annihilating the will of the individual, "in primitive political conditions, the particular aspects of the will are disregarded, and the universal will is alone essential" (Hegel 1975, 95). On the other hand, Hegel criticized the overdevelopment of subjectivity, as it was the case in the United States of his time. He thought that it was especially in America that

²³ As we will see below the same problem faces Habermas's formulations, to which Seyla Benhabib(1986) has responded.

The private citizen is concerned above all with industry and profit, and particular interest, which look to the universal only in order to obtain private satisfaction, are dominant[and] the universal purpose of the state is not yet firmly established (Hegel 1967, 168).

Hegel was quite cognizant of the certain destructive aspects of unchecked subjectivity as he warned against the resultant effects of individuals becoming isolated from one another and the society and selfishness and vanity becoming prevalent at the expense of the whole (Hegel 1975, 146).

Before bringing this section on Hegel to an end, I should discuss some of the general insights that can be derived from his theoretical formulations. Hegel pointed out the enormous potentiality of the human which can be released as a result of the modern revolution of subjectivity. But he also pointed out the destructive aspect of this released and realizing subjectivity. He wanted to curb this destructive force through a synthesis with the "infinite" as the universal. And as we saw, he proposed to achieve this synthesis through a concept of Geist or cosmic spirit whose essence was freedom and we constituted its vehicles. However one might view Hegel's concept of the Geist, and no matter how chimerical it may sound to some of us, the desire to achieve some type of accommodation between the two principles of subjectivity and universality still remains quite valid. As we will see in the discussion of Habermas, the reconciliation between the individual

subjectivity and the three spheres of the outer nature, the inner nature, and society remains a major issue of social theory today.

Another issue which Hegel constantly referred to is the role of reflection in the history of modernity. For Hegel one of the most important corollaries of subjectivity was conscious reflection. In fact, the two are inseparable in his system. Hegel had high praise for a nation who has reached the level of reflexivity and self-consciousness and for which its own culture has become an "object". This means such a nation can consciously change its culture, "belief, trust and custom," even though he attributes such phenomena ultimately to the Geist (Hegel 1975, 146). In a similar vein, Hegel criticized religion for making its assertion uncriticizable (Hegel 1967, 168). This is, in turn, rooted in the fact that the 'truth' of religion is a "given content" and not based on "thinking and the use of concept" (Hegel 1975, 171). In contrast to religion and the church, the "state," in Hegel's larger sense of the modern community of the synthesis, is "that which knows".²⁴ It is not very difficult to realize the importance of this approach toward secularization, as cultural reflexivity and flexibility for any possibility of accommodation of

²⁴ Hegel's thought here has very interesting implications for sociology of religion. In harmony with his philosophy of history, he sees the development of religion--i.e., monotheistic religions rooted in the Middle East-- as the evolution of subjectivity itself. Thus brought to its logical conclusion, Hegel's system regards the monotheistic religions as necessary transition toward modern subjectivity. And the major difference between the stage of monotheistic religions and the modern period lies in the fact that the former is "implicit" or unconscious and the latter by definition self-conscious. It seems that Hegel had this phenomenon in mind when he wrote: "what the spirit is now, it has always been implicitly and the difference is merely in the degree to which this implicit character has been developed. The spirit of the present world is the concept which the spirit forms of its own nature. It is this which sustains and rules the world, and it is the result of 6000 years of effort ..." (Hegel 1975, 150; emphasis added)

social change. Indeed the implications of this approach toward secularization for many of countries of the Middle East, which are in the throes of the battle with the forces of social and cultural change, are far reaching.

Habermas: Language Mediating Subjectivity and Universality

In Habermas's vast corpus of work we find the latest attempt to mediate subjectivity and universality, this time through the medium of language. Habermas devotes a good part of his book, The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, Vol. 1, to the effects of the revolution of subjectivity on the lifeworld in the modern world. Even though in this book Habermas's discourse is not couched in terms of the concept of subjectivity by name, his use of the concept of "rationality" is in fact tantamount to that of subjectivity. Elsewhere, in The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Habermas quotes Hegel to the effect that the modern age is marked by a structure of self-relation which in Hegelian terms is called subjectivity (Habermas 1988, 16). Habermas himself recognizes the principle of subjectivity as the core constituent of modernity. Moreover, Habermas believes that the principle of subjectivity constitutes the core matrix for the normative content of modernity.

An unprecedented modernity, open to the future, anxious for novelty, can only fashion its criteria out of itself. The only source of normativity that presents itself is the principle of subjectivity from which the very time-conscious of modernity arose (Habermas 1988, 41).

Habermas contends that in the modern age, as a result of the emergence of subjectivity, culture has been separated from its religious/mythical bedding and then it has been divided into three "value sphere". He maintains that in traditional society value is not yet differentiated as the validity aspects of the true, the good, and the perfect are integrated in the knowledge of God (Habermas 1981a, 348). It is only as a result of modern subjectivity that a "linguification of the sacred" can take place,

From Durkheim to Levi-Strauss, anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out the peculiar confusion between nature and culture. We can understand this phenomenon to begin with as mixing of two object domains, physical nature and sociocultural environment. Myths do not permit a clear, basic, conceptual differentiation between things and persons, between objects that can be manipulated and agents--subjects capable of speaking and acting to whom we attribute linguistic utterances (Habermas 1981a, 48; emphasis original).²⁵

Habermas builds upon Weber's characterization of cultural modernity as the separation of the "substantive reason" expressed in religion and metaphysics into three autonomous spheres of science, morality, and art which came to be differentiated as a result of the falling apart of the unified religious and metaphysical conceptions of

²⁵ One should be careful about differentiating various levels of "premodernity." Habermas here seems to collapse different stages of mythical and religious premodernity together.

the world (Habermas 1981b, 8).²⁶ In this way Habermas constructs a three-spheres conception of culture which is central to his theory of modernity.

On the level of validity claim the three categories of truth, normative rightness, and authenticity/beauty correspond respectively to his three spheres of science, morality and art (Habermas 1981b, 8 ; 1981a, 71). Alternatively, on the attitudinal level, the set of knowledge, justice and morality and taste correspond respectively to these spheres (Habermas 1981b, 8). On the level of action orientation, these spheres can be described as cognitive-instrumental, moral-practical, and aesthetic-expressive, again respectively. Finally, these three spheres correspond to these "worlds" with which we are in constant interaction and exchange. These are the objective, social and subjective worlds. These three spheres and their correlates can be summarized in the following chart.

Figure 1.

	<u>objective</u>	<u>social</u>	<u>subjective</u>
<u>validity claim dimension</u>	truth	normative rightness(Good)	authenticity/beauty
<u>action orientation dimension</u>	cognitive/instrumental	moral/practical	aesthetic/expressive
<u>attitude dimension</u>	knowledge	justice/morality	taste
<u>institutional dimension</u>	science	morality/law	art

26 Here we see a close correspondence between Habermas's three spheres and Hegel's three spheres of the inner and outer nature and the social universal discussed above.

As we see above Habermas claims that as a result of modernity two sets of related things happen to these three spheres. First, they are extirpated from their sacred matrix and differentiated within themselves.²⁷ Second, the three spheres of the objective, social, and subjective, are progressively uncoupled from what he calls system integration, or the "steering media" of money (capitalist economy) and power (administrative power) and yet at the same time, they are made dependent on these very same steering media (Habermas 1984, 305). I will discuss this second point, what Habermas has called the "colonization of the lifeworld" shortly. But before that I will discuss his critique of premodernity which constitutes a foil against which Habermas constructs his theory of modernity.

The core of his critique of premodernity is comprised of the idea that validity claims pertaining the three spheres in traditional settings are not open to criticism and revision,

mythical worldviews are not understood by members as interpretive systems that are attached to cultural traditions, instituted by internal interrelations of meaning, symbolically related to reality and connected with validity claims--and thus exposed to criticism and open to revision (Habermas 1981a, 52-53).

Consequently, this abstraction of the validity claims and their being over and above the members of society creates "alienation" and

²⁷ With regard to the three spheres of the objective, social, and subjective, Habermas points to the historical process that "the humanism of the Renaissance made the Roman-Greek heritage accessible to the science, jurisprudence, and art that were emancipating from the church" (Habermas 1984, 286).

severely handicaps any process of social change. This situation is best illustrated with regards to the traditional views on the law: "at the stage of traditional law, norms are taken as given, as conventions that are passed on" (Habermas 1981a, 258).

In contrast, Habermas believes it is only in modern society where criticism and revision of legal norms are allowed (Habermas 1981a, 258-60). This in turn is conducive to a just society since in modernity, "the model for justifying legal norms is an uncoerced agreement, arrived at by those affected, in the role of contractual partners who are in principle free and equal" (Habermas 1981a, 261). It is in this connection, Habermas emphasizes, that the possibility of civil and democratic rights can exist only in the cultural milieu of modern society, "the interest in the protection and extensive use of civil rights and democratic self-determination are two equal, mutually complimentary components, which are equally rooted in cultural modernity" (Habermas 1983, 7).

However, Habermas, like his predecessor Hegel, is aware of the problems associated with "unmediated" subjectivity of the modern age and the associated problems of domination. Like Hegel, Habermas sees the diremptions resulting from the expansion of the principle of modern subjectivity and attempts to "reconcile" those diremption through a theory of intersubjectivity as opposed to mere subjectivity.²⁸ But he criticizes Hegel for attempting to develop this intersubjectivity based on the principle of modern subjectivity itself and eventually failing to ground it in a communicative action theory

²⁸ See Habermas's *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), especially Lectures I and II.

(Habermas 1987, 30-31). Thus Habermas contends to continue the project of overcoming the problem of modernity. This time in its proper direction, which Hegel had failed to achieve, through the mediation of language: "membership in the ideal communicative community is, in Hegelian terms, constitutive of both the I as universal and the I as individual" (Habermas 1984, 97).

Habermas offers an alternative paradigm for the reconciliation of subjectivity and universality through communication, where neither individual subjectivity nor the universality is to be sacrificed,

A different model for the mediation of the universal and the individual is provided by the higher level intersubjectivity of an uncoerced formation of will within a communication community existing under constraints toward cooperation in the universality of an uncoerced consensus arrived at among free and equal persons, individuals retain a court of appeal that can be called upon even against particular forms of institutional concretization of the common will (Habermas 1987; emphasis original).

Here the importance of language as the medium through which subjectivity and universality, the two essential themes in this dissertation, are reconciled by Habermas cannot be overemphasized. In his earlier writing Habermas had identified language as the very matrix from which both subjectivity and universality and the means for their reconciliation arise,

The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can

know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence express unequivocally the intention of a universal and unconstrained consensus (Habermas 1971, 314).

In this powerful passage Habermas demonstrates the peculiar capacity of language which can both manifest the freedom of individual subjectivity in uttering completely idiosyncratic sentences and at the same time its universal understandability within the membership of the language group.

However, this reconciliation between subjective freedom and universality can only take place in the modern era, since in traditional and religious metaphysical society, the division of action orientation into two spheres of the "sacred" and "profane" made the sacred sphere immune to communicative action orientation (Habermas 1984, 189-90). It is only in the transition to modernity that the functions of social integration and expressivity, which were originally fulfilled through the ritual are gradually taken over by the communicative action and the authority vested in what was holy begins to be replaced by the authority of the achieved consensus (Habermas 1984, 77).

In recent years Habermas has engaged in a debate with some of the critiques of modernity which sometimes takes on a polemical character. In this debate Habermas accuses the proponents of "negative dialectic," genealogy and deconstruction, and one may add Weberian iron-cage rationalization, of wanting to do away with subjectivity altogether. Habermas contends that these groups and their theories view the subjectivity of modern times as the culprit in

the phenomenon of domination who want to throw the baby with the bath water. Thus in his view these groups are involved in an,

undialectical rejection of subjectivity. [And] not only the devastating consequences of an objectifying relation-to-self are condemned [by these groups] along with this principle of modernity, but also the other connotations once associated with subjectivity as an unredeemed promise: the prospect of a self-conscious practice, in which the solidary self-determination of all was to be joined with the self-realization of each (Habermas 1987, 337-8; emphasis original).

In this way, Habermas rightly points out, these so-called poststructuralist critiques of modernity are discarding the very normative content of modernity--i.e., the autonomy of subjectivity. As Habermas aptly continues in the same passage,

What is thrown out is precisely what a modernity reassuring itself once meant by the concepts of self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-realization (Habermas 1987, 338).

Habermas argues that the source of this problems was the critique of modernity which has strong roots in the work of Max Weber. According to Habermas, Weber distinguished between the three spheres of objective, social, and subjective worlds and their correlates of the instrumental rationality, moral/practical discourse and aesthetic expressivity. But, Weber failed to acknowledge the possibility of the "logic" of each sphere developing independently and perceived all the spheres dominated and pervaded by

instrumental rationality. This view of the world, wrongly equates subjectivity only with domination and its vehicle in the modern world, i.e., instrumental rationality. To be sure, something of this sort does happen and there is a strong tendency for the "system imperatives" of the "steering media" of money and power to colonize the spheres of the life-world.²⁹ But this colonization of the life-world (i.e., that of the three spheres of the objective, moral/practical and subjective worlds) are by no means total or irreversible. Rather, it is the very project of modernity which Habermas undertakes to continue, to separate each sphere and allow them to develop according to their inner logic and thus "decolonize" these spheres.

The project of modernity formulated in the eighteenth century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic (Habermas 1981b, 22).

In the face of recent resurgence of nihilism, expressed in certain strands of genealogy and poststructuralism, Habermas's efforts to redeem the promises of the project of modernity is nothing less than valiant. However, there are two criticisms which have important bearings for the theoretical constructs we are concerned with here. One is the potential for the "colonization" of the relationship between the subject and the inner and outer nature, where the logocentric logic of the moral/practical sphere and its communicative ethics come to dominate these two other spheres. Using the psychoanalytic

29 See for example Habermas 1984, 354-55.

terminology, Rainer Nagel, for example, has criticized Habermas's model because,

the backbone of this model is the concept of the self-identical subject that has full control over all of its discourse. Habermas appoints as absolute ruler what in Freud is presented as an extremely precarious and constantly shifting position of authority, which on the one hand attains at best to the limited role of "constitutional monarch," and on the other, courts as a "slave" his "master's love" of it (Nagele 1981, 55).

Habermas does not seem to have addressed this issue very elaborately. Yet, he seems to be aware of this problem as he has attempted to distance himself from the Kantian radical opposition between reason and inclination. He has said,

discourse ethics gives up Kant's dichotomy between intelligible realm comprising duty and free will and a phenomenal realm comprising inclinations, [and] subjective motives ... (Habermas 1993, 326).

The second critique of Habermas's discourse ethics and general will formation, which can be levelled at any theory of universalization, is that whether it leaves any space for difference and pluralism.³⁰ Habermas rejects this charge, but again he does not

³⁰ At this point, it is necessary to make a note on the correspondence between the ideas of universal subjectivity or the ethics of general will on the one hand and the emergence of the "masses" or people on the other hand. The emergence of the "people," which the events and the aftermath of the French Revolution exemplified for the first time in modern history, has been interpreted in very different ways. On the one hand it generated the excitement about the universalization of subjectivity and its spread among the masses as reflected in earlier analysis of Hegel. On the other hand the

seem to have sufficiently addressed this problem beyond the remarks that

Neither Kantian ethics, nor discourse ethics lays itself open to the objection that a moral point of view based on the generalizability of norms necessarily leads to the neglect, if not the repression, of existing conditions and interests in a pluralist society. As interests and value orientation become more differentiated in modern societies, the morally justified norms that control the individual's scope of action in the interest of the whole become even more general and abstract. Modern societies are also characterized by the need for regulation that impinge only on particular interests. While these matters do require regulation, a discursive consensus is not needed; compromise is quite sufficient in this area (Habermas 1993, 328).

Here it seems Habermas is attempting to treat the problem of totalizing which belongs to the very principle of universality as an epiproblem. A way out of this dilemma has been suggested by Seyla Benhabib. She has put forward the concept of "complementary reciprocity," as a form of universalization which takes into account the fact of and the desire for, difference and plurality, and where

Our relation to the other is governed by the norm of complementary reciprocity: each is entitled to expect

emergence of the "masses" has been interpreted as the mortal blow to the notion of subjectivity and human emancipation as reflected in the work of Le Bon and other early analysis of mass psychology. It seems to me that these two accounts are not necessarily mutually exclusive, rather they constitute a manifestation of the antithetical dimension of the relationship between subjectivity and universality. This situation is most visible in populist/totalitarian regimes where the elites in order to manipulate the masses utilize the principles of universality to negate individual subjectivity.

and to assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents, and capacities. Our difference in this case complement rather than exclude one another (Benhabib 1986, 341).

Whether this conceptualization will prove to be utopian or might point to a way out the dilemma of the totalizing tendency of universality remains to be seen. But what it serves to call for is the need for a situation in which subjectivity and universality can coexist without each cancelling the other out.

Chapter Two

Dialogues with Modernity

Modernity and Capitalism

The main contention of this section is that capitalism has both promoted subjectivity and universality as the principles of modernity and simultaneously hampered and circumscribed them. This dialectic of capitalism and modernity can first be seen in the connection between free market and freedom of contract. On the one hand the idea of subjectivity receives a boost from the mechanism of the market which has eliminated all the historical and "natural" restraints imposed on participants in the contract, thus allowing the emergence of free agents involved in contract. On the other hand, as Marx has shown, the freedom of contract, when applied to class relations is nothing but an illusion.

As I mentioned earlier, subjectivity cannot be reduced to notion of the freedom of individual. Rather, it has more a positive connotation involving acting on the world. In this sense the bourgeois entrepreneur is the best embodiment of subjectivity. This is not done by the entrepreneur in any consciousness to promote emancipation. Rather, as Marshal Berman has put it, "with his eye for the main chance, his celebration of selfishness and his genial lack of scruple, the capitalist entrepreneur very much conforms to Goethe's Mephisto rather than Faust's utopian dreams about human potentials" (Berman 1988, 72).

But, what this subject qua entrepreneur has achieved is quite revolutionary in the history of modernity. First, it has shattered most of the religious and medieval restrictions on subjectivity. Second, the bourgeoisie has developed the productive forces beyond what could be imagined in the premodern era to facilitate the overcoming of natural restrictions on emancipation. Third, the bourgeoisie has changed the relations of domination from caste and semi-caste ones to that of class. Fourth, as I just discussed above, it has simultaneously expanded and restricted universality.

In this connection between modernity and capitalism the role of Protestantism as the historical matrix of modern capitalism is pivotal. Before any discussion of the role of Protestantism in the emergence of modernity, it should be emphasized that this role conforms to what Hegel called *cunning of history* in which ultimate results and consequences are often unforeseen. As Weber has warned, "the cultural consequences of the Reformation were to a great extent unforeseen and even unwished for results of the labors of the reformers" (Weber 1958, 90).

The Protestant emphasis on labor--whatever its origins might be, as discussed by Weber--conforms well with the acting on the world that characterizes subjectivity. Although subjectivity cannot be confined to worldly activity, the latter is a constituent part of it. Thus the Protestant ethic provided one indispensable prerequisite for the emergence of the autonomous subject, namely the worldly activity of labor--notwithstanding the complications accompanying it, which I will discuss later. Related to this issue is the empowering of the subject through the formation of discipline and methodical

rationalization achieved by the reformers--again notwithstanding or the associated complications. As Cascardi has observed,

Protestant asceticism contested the values of "traditional" society by replacing one form of discipline with another, more "modern" form. In accepting as its model the ideal of the self-made man who is the product of his labor and responsive to his "calling" and who is likewise free from any internal dependence on tradition or community the call to labor became a moral imperative Through labor, the authority of norms is internalized; the self-made man is the precursor of Kant's autonomous subject, and may be identified by the virtue of the fact that he is able to give himself the law (Cascardi 1992, 170-171).

What is perhaps of essential importance among contributions of Protestantism to modernity is the form of individuality which it gave to subjectivity. Weber in The Protestant Ethic maintained that the consequence of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual (Weber 1958, 104). In a related vein, with the elimination of the priestly hierarchy as a mediator, one more hurdle was eliminated from the road towards the subjectivity of the individual. Again this should not be interpreted such that Protestantism had any intention, or during the life time of its founders was able, to create anything close to an individual subject which, as we shall see, challenges any notion of traditional monotheistic positions.

Weber deemphasized the "political" dimension of Protestantism--i.e., the centrality of the individual--as he stressed the economic

dimension of Protestantism. Thus he almost completely neglects the rebellion of the Protestants against the priestly hierarchy, symbolized in the defiant act of Luther nailing his theses on the Church door which paved the road for the emergence of the autonomous subject.

However, imbedded in Weber's analysis one can find the nitty gritty mechanisms prerequisite for the expansion of not only modern subjectivity but also universality. The universalistic tendency among Protestant capitalists had its origins in the class background of their members. As Weber has observed,

[A]t the beginning of modern times it was by no means the capitalistic entrepreneurs of the commercial aristocracy who were either the sole or the predominant bearers of the attitude we have here called the spirit of capitalism. It was much more the rising strata of the lower industrial middle classes. Even in the nineteenth century its classical representatives were not the elegant gentlemen of Liverpool and Hamburg with their commercial fortunes handed down for generations, but the self-made parvenus of Manchester and Westphalia, who often rose from very modest circumstances. As early as the sixteenth century the situation was similar, the industries which arose at that time were mostly created by parvenus (Weber 1958, 65).

Yet, the social psychological insight that the humble class origins of the emerging class made them prone to expand universality does not prevent them from suppressing this very universality--e.g.,

suppression of universal suffrage until quite recently in the history of most Western countries--once that class has come to power.

It should be understood that the initial contribution that Protestantism made to the promotion of modernity as subjectivity was a dialectical process which also created conditions for the suppression of this very subjectivity. Ethical puritanism and the harsh and repressive discipline of the Protestants was the very negation of the subject save their commercial activity.

So far in this section I have mostly discussed the formative effects of Protestantism on capitalist modernity. But, the link between modernity and capitalism can and should be explored beyond Protestantism. With regards to universality, for example, the relations that are based on exchange and found in the full-fledged capitalism are simultaneously supportive and repressive of universality. Hegel acknowledged the universalizing tendency of capitalism when he observed that,

in civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him. But except in contract with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends, and therefore these others are means to the end of the particular member. A particular end, however, assumes the form of universality through this relation to other people and it is attained in the simultaneous attainment of the welfare of others (cited by Habermas 1987a, 37-38).

What is omitted in this analysis is the simultaneous opposite tendency of the bourgeoisie to restrict its universalizing tendency

because, essentially, of its motivating force of the maximization of gain in a world with finite resources.

Consequences of Modernity

The most visible and probably important effect of modernity is perhaps to be found in the transformation it has brought to, and the weakening of, the "primary" relations (of domination). The emergence of the self-defining, autonomous subject targets first and foremost the relations in which the human individual had been in the position of subordination.

Of course, prototypical among these relation are those between the transcendental God of monotheism and the human worshipper. The rise of human subjectivity in the West since the Renaissance has gradually weakened, if not completely annihilated, the sovereign-subordinate relations between God and human. This relatively common sensical phenomenon is at the bottom of the secularization of the modern era.

This has had a ripple effect on all other "primary" relations. The relation between priest and parishioner has been transformed, as best exemplified in the subdued place of clergy in Protestantism. Monarchy has been abolished or reduced to mostly symbolic status in the Western world (and now even the non-West). The medieval institutions of vassalage have been almost totally dismantled in the West.

In the same vein, Oedipal relations, those between father and son, parents and children, and intra-familial relations in general, have been very much transformed. To be sure, these change have come

about gradually, and each area of primary relations has been subjected to change in varying degrees at different times.

It seems that the intra-familial relations are the latest set of "primary" relations (and perhaps the most concrete among them that are undergoing change--generally weakening) as a result of the ascendancy of the autonomous subject of modernity. Thus it is not accidental that neuroses which Freud encountered at the turn of the century were very much a result of the changes that modern subjectivity was bringing to familial relations and the anxiety associated with the disruption of these relations. Durkheim's concept of anomie also refers to the same disruption of norms associated with the old primary relations (not just the family) without being replaced by the norms developed on basis of "new" types of relations.

The transformation in primary relations has either directly or indirectly meant a change in the relations of domination. To the question of What are the new relations of domination? there are two classes of responses. One is that medieval caste-like relations of domination are transformed into modern class relations with all their complications. The more recent extension of this trend can be found in Foucault's analysis of the disciplinary type of domination. On the other hand, according to the second type of analysis it is believed that in modernity contractual relations have replaced the old caste-like relations. There is, however, some sort of convergence between these two positions as especially when Foucault's revisions are considered.

The story of the type of class domination is familiar--the impersonal, abstract relations of formal equality, but still of domination. The evolution of this type of modern domination constitutes one of the main theses of Michel Foucault's works. By focusing on crime and punishment in their premodern and modern contexts, Foucault tried to illuminate the evolution of domination. He noticed that in the premodern era, punishment of the criminal constituted the embodiment of the power of the sovereign over the "subjects" (subordinates)--hence its physical, persona, atrocious and torturous form (Foucault 1979, 57).

In modernity, on the other hand, power has became much more subtle, impersonal, invisible and thereby more insidious. It operates through what Foucault calls "discipline," defined as "methods which make possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assumed the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility" (Foucault 1979, 137).

These methods are obviously derived from the subject's objectifying "outer" nature now applied to the "inner" nature of the "other" to bring about the empowering of those who possess those types of knowledge. Those who possess these specialized types of knowledge are of course the "experts". Foucault, for example, points to the role of the doctor in wielding power over people's sexuality, so that in modernity the Church's intervention in sexual matters decreased as "medicine made a forceful entry into the pleasure of the couple" (Foucault 1980, 41). What is so important in Foucault's analysis is that it illuminates that in modernity the objectifying subject is now the doctor, the expert, the administrator. In other

words now the citizens objectify other citizens through abstract and non-personal disciplinary power mechanisms.

There are two implications in this analysis of power in modernity. First, it demonstrates the "expansion" of the basis of power in the modern era. It means that power has been decentralized. There are no longer one or two centers of power such as the monarchy and the church (Foucault 1980, 49). Second, since the subject and object of power are both citizens (subjects) the one-directionality and absoluteness of power has decreased. Patients, inmates and various other citizenship rights are all a part of this process. Foucault, tacitly acknowledging the possibility of the dialectical process of power in modernity, wrote,

the general juridical form that guaranteed a system of rights that were egalitarian in principle was supported by these tiny, everyday physical mechanisms, by all those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian as asymmetrical that we call the disciplines. And although, in a formal way, the representative regime makes it possible, directly or indirectly, with or without relays, for the will of all to form the fundamental authority of sovereignty the disciplines provide, at the base, a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies. The real, corporal disciplines constituted the foundation of the formal, juridical liberties. The contract may have been regarded as the ideal foundation of law and political power; panopticism constituted the techniques, universally widespread, of coercion. It continued to work in depth on the juridical structure of society in order to make effective mechanisms of power function in opposition to the formal framework that it had acquired. The "Enlightenment", which

discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines (Foucault 1979, 222).

The second line of thinking about the social relation in modernity which considers contractual relations as the more important is found most elaborately and articulately in the work of Habermas. He has argued that as results of the modern subjectivity, three moments of the lifeworld have been separated from their religious/metaphysical grounding. The spheres are comprised of a) objective; b) social; c) subjective worlds. By the objective sphere Habermas means those areas of human life which are related to cognitive and scientific propositional truths. The social sphere pertains to normative, moral and legal validity claims which constitute the basis of social relations. The subjective sphere has to do with the "expressive" realm of aesthetic evaluations (Habermas 1984, 71-72). In the premodern era these three components of the lifeworld were mediated through the sacred and were part and parcel of the religious establishment. It is only as a result of modernity that these three spheres are separated out and a "linguification" of the sacred has taken place. The result is that validity claims within each sphere are exposed to criticism and open to revision (Habermas 1984, 52). This applies to the social sphere wherein social relations are embedded and means the fluidity of social relations which characterizes the contractual relations. The civil and individual rights and liberties of modernity are derived from this type of relations.

What is of central importance in the primary types of relation is the issue of "obedience". All the primary relations operate on this

principle. With the weakening of primary relations what has gained in strength is doubt. Hence, the institutionalization of doubt not only in sciences but other areas of social life. Yet, this is only a partial picture, since with the weakening of religion and other primary relations another type of "obedience" in the form of positivistic certainty was substituted for the lost one. For instance, the modern scientific enterprise simultaneously encompasses doubts and certitude. This, I believe, is at the core of the paradox of doubt and certainty which characterizes the modern scientific attitude.

Modernity and its Discontents

The early thinkers of the Enlightenment were too optimistic about the emancipation that would come about in the wake of the emerging human subject. The ideas of progress, liberation and equality, even though not merely ideological constructs for the purpose of legitimization, have been countered by the discontents which are more or less peculiar to the modern era.

These discontents can be divided into two large categories: 1) those which the subject imposes on the "other"; 2) those in which the subject itself suffers more directly. To the first category belong problems of colonialism, the proletariat, women, minorities, etc. The subject of modernity--i.e., the male, white, middle-class (and higher) Euro-American --in order to become the subject has objectified the inhabitants of the Third World, women, the indigenous proletariat, immigrants and minorities. This has had enormous consequences for the majority of the inhabitants of the world and has shaped the history of the world, and will continue to do so for a long time to

come. But, at the same time, this process has showed the possibility of becoming subjects to all those "subalterns" and until subjectivity is universalized struggles of the subalterns will continue. This is evident in national struggles for independence, women's movements, civil rights and international human rights movements,¹ even though some of these movements have rejected the project of modernity--e.g., so-called "Islamic Fundamentalism".

The second type of the discontents of modernity pertain more to the "self" of the modern subject. The roots of these types of "problem" can be traced back to what has been termed "direnption" from nature. As it was discussed earlier, the modern subject in order to achieve its status of subjectivity attempted to impress its purpose on nature and thus caused a separation between reason and nature, a problem to which Hegel and his Romantic predecessor and successor paid a great deal of attention. The consequences of this process, in turn, can be divided into two classes of discontents. The first class has its roots in the development of what Habermas would call the cognitive sphere and the related expansion of instrumental rationality. The second class has to do more directly with the loss of the "firm grounding" of the traditional society and its "contentments".

The first class can be characterized broadly as what Weber would call loss of freedom. Ironically the "free" agent of modernity in the attempt to achieve subjectivity, has objectified nature and developed instrumental rationality; but because of the very same process has lost its freedom. To this category belong concepts such as

¹ Among these movements the labor movement in the West was perhaps the earliest but by now it is less acute partially because the Western working class has attained some of the power it has historically struggled for.

rationalization, bureaucratization, reification, and Sartre's notion of seriality. The common discontent of all those phenomena is that as a result of them humans have lost the very freedom they sought to attain through them. It is manifested in the impersonal, formal, and massive social settings and organizations to which Weber applied the trope of the "iron cage". I will skip an elaboration of these because they have been exhausted in the literature.

The second category of the modern discontents are related to the purported loss of a firm grounding found in traditional society. To this group belong what Weber would call loss of meaning and Hegel referred to as the problems of "vacuity". Hegel believed, as we saw earlier, that the freedom associated with subjectivity on which the entire modern Kantian ethics of formal rationality was based, was flawed because it was based on human reason alone. Thus, as we saw before, in Hegel's analysis the separation of ethics from its suprahuman source, has rendered it empty. Weber refers to the same phenomenon when he addresses modern "polytheism" of different gods and demons. The process of disenchantment, incredibility towards a transcendental and substantive source of culture, has resulted in the rejection of any single set of belief in particular and a sense of meaninglessness in general (Habermas 1981a, 44-47).

It is very important to establish the relation between subjectivity and loss of meaning. It seems that meaning has to come to us from outside. Left to ourselves, we are incapable of satisfying our own

existential needs.² Nevertheless, different theorists have responded to this question, and other related issues, in different ways. Marx, for example, celebrated the destruction of what he deemed to be the superstitions and prejudices of the premodern era in the process of capitalist modernization, as best exemplified in the pages of the *Communist Manifesto*,

All fixed, fast-frozen relations within their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind (Marx and Engels 1782, 476).

Of course, Marx saw both opportunity to achieve what he called human history (as opposed to hitherto "pre-history") and loss as a result of the enormous force of capitalist modernity. Marx thought that the Communist society would be a "sublating" of this situation and it would integrate elements of both premodern "stability" and modern excitement of creating a new human history.

But, other more conservative thinkers have looked at the same phenomenon with much more pessimism and have seen in capitalist modernity only destructiveness even though they have championed the cause of capitalism in its economic aspect. To this group of cultural conservatives belong people such as Edmund Burke, Daniel Bell, and to some extent Peter Berger.

² This issue is implicitly rejected by Habermas. See his Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I and II.

Daniel Bell has demonstrated this "destructive" tendency of capitalism most forcefully in his Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1978). According to him, historically, most social structures and cultures have shown some sort of unity. Christiandom exhibited this unity and consistency in its ordered ranks of society with regard to both the Church hierarchy and in the hierarchies of heaven and hell in the human quest for salvation. Similarly in the early modernity, "bourgeois culture and bourgeois social structure fused a distinct unity with a specific character structure around the theme of order and work" (Bell 1978, 36). Today, however, there has been created a radical disjunction between the social structure, defined as the "techno-economic order", and the cultural sphere. The former is organized around an economic principle defined in terms of, "efficiency and functional rationality, the organization of production through the ordering of things, including man as things" (Bell 1978, 37). The cultural sphere, on the other hand, is "prodigal" and "promiscuous". On the whole today,

The character structure inherited from the nineteenth century, with its emphasis on self-discipline, delayed gratification, and restraint, is still relevant to the demands of the techno-economic structure, but it clashes sharply with the culture, where such bourgeois values have been completely rejected--in part, paradoxically, because of the workings of the capitalist economic system itself (Bell 1978, 37).

It is interesting that Bell implicitly acknowledges the principle of subjectivity when he characterizes modern human as the "self-

infinitizing creature who is impelled to search for the beyond" (Bell 1978, 47). It is the principle of subjectivity behind the impulse driving both the entrepreneur and the artists, which is "a restlessness to search out the new, to rework nature and to refashion consciousness" (Bell 1978, 16). But the moments of the same impulse became antithetical to each other in the process of the development of cultural conservatism, "the bourgeois economic impulse was organized into a highly restrictive character structure whose energies were channelled into the production of goods and into a set of attitudes toward work that feared instinct, spontaneity and vagrant impulse". The cultural impulse, on the other hand, "turned into rage against bourgeois values" (Bell 1978, 17).

Thus, as the cultural "nihilism" of capital stemming from the principle of modern subjectivity was perceived as a threat it was checked by a conservatism which channelled the creative impulses released by subjectivity into an aggressive, commercial activity while cultural activity was made to revolve around the conservative institutions of the Church and especially the family.

Peter Berger, among others, has pointed out another of the discontents of modernity in the loss of a sense of community and hence belongingness of the individual which jeopardizes social cohesion and solidarity. In his book, Facing up to Modernity, he has identified five "dilemmas" of modernity (Berger 1977, 70-80). They comprise the dilemma of: 1) living in an abstract social setting; 2) futurity (a profound concern with temporality and future); 3) individualization; 4) liberation; and 5) secularization (Berger 1977, 70-80). The one theme that runs through most of these categories is

the loss of a sense of belonging to a community. The individual subjectivity of the modern era in the form of individual rights and liberties has driven a wedge between the individual and community and made those two antithetical.

In a similar vein, for D. H. Lawrence "the instinct of community" was vital. He thought it was deeper and stronger than even the sexual instinct. He criticized the industrial society of England because he thought it withheld a sense of community from the individual (Williams 1966, 205).

However, as Berger has pointed out, this antithesis between the individual and the community has been historically mitigated in the form of nation-state patriotism which is a product of modernity. In fact modern nation-state patriotism, (and now even ethnic patriotism) seems to function as a substitute for the loss of premodern strong sense of community--albeit not always a successful substitute

Dialogues with Modernity

In this section I will attempt to analyze certain aspects of some of the major modern thinkers in terms of the two criteria of subjectivity and universality. I will schematically discuss some of the aspects of the works of Marx, Adorno, Nietzsche and Althusser in their relevance to modernity.

Marx: Overcoming Modernity

For Marx, labor was the key to humans' position as subjects since humans create and recreate themselves and the means for these is labor. Physically, humans create themselves by appropriating nature and producing the conditions of their existence. They also recreate themselves by first existing through labor and then procreating their species. Thus, in Marx's view, for all practical purposes, humans are the creator of themselves and not an "alien" being who has control over them such as God or gods. For, as Marx argued, an individual is in a position of servitude to another entity to whom s/he owes her/his existence. But since humans owe their existence to themselves alone, through their labor, they are the master of themselves and their conditions--a position of subjectivity.

However, this is not the state of affairs in actuality. Alienation is the process by which the majority of humans have lost their mastery over themselves and nature. Private property which is the material expression of human labor, along with its agent, the bourgeoisie, has become the master of humans and has forced them into servitude. Thus labor, the servant of humans, has become the master and the master has become the servant.

In the concept of alienation, Marx revealed the negative aspect of human labor as the vehicle of subjectivity as well. Not only is labor a means by which humans create themselves, it can also become a force outside them which has power over them and confronts them. The commodity which is objectified human labor assumes a life of its own and gains control over human life.

On the other hand, it was the bourgeoisie who brought about the reversal of subjectivity (i.e., alienation) on the majority and

indirectly onto itself. Thus the problem of modernity for Marx had two aspects: not only was subjectivity reversed, but also the majority had become deprived of it (negation of universality). In this instance the relation between subjectivity and its universalization are closely intertwined. Thus the reversal or negation of universality is tantamount to its denial to the majority (the proletariat) in the capitalist era.

The overcoming of alienation, in Marx's analysis, was to universalize subjectivity by abolishing private property. This was designed to restore subjectivity to humans in general. But Marx viewed the subject not as an individual but as a class of the proletariat and as a collectivity. Thus his universalization excluded the individual subjectivity. This phenomenon has had far-reaching consequences for the history of socialism. The totalitarian tendency in socialism, instead of universalization of subjectivity, is very much rooted in this problem.

With the dismissal of the individual as the agent of subjectivity, it is a very easy step to consider the party, the state or any other collective entity as the subject and everyone else as its object.

Adorno: The Dialectic of Modernity

Adorno's (and Horkheimer's) assessment of modernity is very closely linked to Marx's critique of capitalism as alienation, except Adorno's analysis is directly informed by the category of subjectivity. Adorno viewed the history of modernity as the evolution of subjectivity. The thrust of his argument was that modern subjectivity in order to "enthrone" itself has in the process

objectified itself and thus annulled its own subjectivity. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* he and Horkheimer have argued that,

In class history, the enmity of the self to sacrifice implied a sacrifice of the self, inasmuch as it was paid for by a denial of nature in man for the sake of domination over non-human nature and over other men. This very denial, the nucleus of all civilizing rationality, is the germ cell of all proliferating mythic irrationality: with the denial of nature in man not merely the Telos of the outward control of nature but also the Telos of man's own life is distorted and befogged. As soon as man discards his awareness that he himself is nature, all the aims for which he keeps himself alive--social progress, the intensification of all his material and spiritual powers, even consciousness itself-- are nullified and the enthronement of the means as an end, which under late capitalism is tantamount to open insanity, is already perceptible in the prehistory of subjectivity. Man's domination over himself, which grounds his selfhood, is almost always the destruction of the subject in whose service it is undertaken (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, 54; emphasis added).

Thus, in Adorno's account, the development of subjectivity, in its moment of instrumental rationality has landed the evolution of the Enlightenment in Fascism where any notion of subjectivity, except for the Fuhrer, is abandoned.

Adorno has a somewhat different account of what happens to subjectivity under Fascism in a different context. In his analysis of Fascism in terms of mass psychology, Adorno deployed a basically Freudian scheme. Freud's analysis of mass psychology led him to

view the mass phenomenon as the fusion of the individual subject into the collectivity. The specific mechanism that Freud postulated to account for the fusion of the individual into the collectivity was the process of **identification**. The family served as the cell in which the individual as a young child surrendered his individual subjectivity to identification with father. It is in this process that preparation for the fusion of the individual into the collectivity takes place (Freud 1965, ch. 7).

It was Adorno who elaborated on those postulates of Freud and tried to explicate the mass phenomenon of Fascism. Adorno also posited the specific mechanism at the bottom of mass phenomena to be identification,

[T]he mechanism which transforms libido into the bond between leader and follower and between the followers themselves, is that of **identification** (Adorno 1978, 125; emphasis original).

In sum, Adorno postulated the process of identification as the surrendering of individual subjectivity to a notion of collectivity embedded in an abstraction such as Führer or Volk. It is ironic that the notion of universality plays a positive role in bringing about the Fascist regime. One of the demands of the "masses" who support Fascism is equality, although what they get is a distorted form of it, as the Fascist regime perpetuates its legitimacy and rule by resorting to demagogic promises of equality to the downtrodden.

Adorno viewed Fascism as rather two distinct phenomena: a) the abandoning of subjectivity as the unintended consequence of the

evolution of subjectivity; and b) a revolt against subjectivity.³ In my opinion these two views are not as complementary to one another as they first appear. The reason is that Adorno had a very one-sided analysis of the evolution of modernity, at least in his Dialectic of the Enlightenment. As Habermas has pointed out, Adorno viewed modernity here, merely as the development of instrumental rationality which inevitably would lead to Auschwitz (Habermas 1981a, 350). Adorno did not take into account the evolution of secular law and morality which has evolved, parallel to instrumental rationality, in liberal democracy which is a deterrent to the total abandoning, or revolt against subjectivity--i.e., Fascism. Since Adorno in his analysis did not consider the separation in the three moments of the lifeworld--the cognitive instrumental sphere, the moral-practical sphere, and evaluative-expressive sphere--as Habermas has done, he could not envision the parallel evolution of the two latter spheres to the cognitive-instrumental sphere and the system of "checks and balances" they may provide.

Adorno's critique of mass culture in advanced capitalist society with a claim to liberal democracy, on the other hand, has placed the exaggerated claims about individual subjectivity by its apologists in a proper perspective. In this analysis the culture industry as the exigency of world capitalism and embodied in consumerism is a negation of subjectivity,

[M]ass culture discloses the fictitious character of the "individual" in the bourgeois era and is merely unjust in boasting on account of this dreary harmony of

³ Hence, the notion of Fascism as "psychoanalysis in reverse."

general and particular. The principle of individuality was always full of contradiction. Individuation has never really been achieved. Self-preservation in the shape of class has kept everyone at the stage of a mere species beingThe individual who supported society bore its disfiguring mark; seemingly free, he was actually, the product of its economic apparatus and social apparatus (Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, 155).

It is my contention that it is wrong to assume that the commercial sphere has totally annulled the principle of subjectivity in the different spheres of culture. Even though these spheres--i.e., Habermas's cognitive instrumental (science), moral-practical (morality and law) and evaluative-expressive(aesthetic) spheres-- are to a large degree controlled by the necessities of the market and its cultural and social exigencies, there are daily struggles between these exigencies and the quest for freedom, in which the outcomes are not necessarily predetermined.

Nietzsche: Radical Subjectivity at the Expense of Universality

Nietzsche took the notion of human subjectivity of the Enlightenment to its most extreme limit. He viewed the individual as the absolute sovereign,

If we place ourselves at the end of this tremendous process where the tree at last brings forth fruit, where society and the morality of custom at last reveal what they have simply been the means to; then we discover that the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated

again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral (for "autonomous" and "moral" are mutually exclusive)(Nietzsche 1967, 59; emphasis original).⁴

As it is evident from the above passage, Nietzsche considered traditional society as the primary obstacle to the development of modern subjectivity. He referred to it as the morality of mores (Nietzsche 1967, 59).

The notion of "will to power" is Nietzsche's way of expressing his view of human subjectivity in all its radicalness. This notion, of course, has been a source of controversy, surrounding much of his thought. In certain passages he equates this notion with domination of one elite or one dictator, or one race over others. In one passage Nietzsche describes the will to power as the, "essence of life...the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and direction..." (Nietzsche 1967, 79).⁵

However, it should not be surprising that subjectivity becomes domination in Nietzsche's scheme. He thought that real subjectivity is only possible for the few. He believed that subjectivity is not only not universalizable, but in order to exist it has to be confined to the

⁴ To be certain, Nietzsche's conception of subjectivity was a peculiar one. Mediated by the aesthetic dimension of the Dionysian and surrendering itself to madness and intoxication, it pits the aesthetic dimension against reason as antithetical, instead of trying to bridge the gap between them. See Habermas 1987, 92-97.

⁵ For a brief discussion of Nietzsche's view of the historical evolution of subjectivity see his remarks on the Renaissance and the Reformation."What does the Renaissance prove? That the reign of the individual has to be brief...In the Reformation we possess a wild and vulgar counterpart to the Italian Renaissance, born of related impulses; only in the retarded north, which had remained coarse, they had to don a religious disguise...Through the Reformation, too the individual sought freedom;'everybody his own priest' is also a mere formula of libertinage" (Nietzsche 1968, 57).

few, the strong, the elite. This is best demonstrated in his remarks against "democratic" reforms and measures, or what he would call the impulses of the "masses," demanded by progressive forces in his time.

Nietzsche's thought is amply rich with insights but at the same time it is replete with contradictions. Thus the concept of *Ressentiment* is in contradiction with his concept of will to power. *Ressentiment* can be interpreted as the social psychological dimension of the "objects" of the elite's subjectivity. The few subjects who become the master over the majority of humanity only engender the feelings of resentment among the "slaves". But at the hands of the clergy, this feeling of resentment in the victims is transformed into a resignation and an ethos of being an "object" as something good and moral is created (Nietzsche 1967, 128). Nietzsche called this phenomenon *Ressentiment*.⁶ Implicit in his notion of *Ressentiment* are two points which militate against his notion of radical subjectivity--i.e., subjectivity for the few; not universalized subjectivity. First, if the desire for being a subject is not universalizable, those who are its objects would not develop a resentment against being dominated. Secondly, were this resentment not strong enough, it would not be necessary for the clergy to try to "emasculate" it by transforming it into *Ressentiment*.

On rare occasions Nietzsche exhibited a seminal germ in the understanding of the universality of subjectivity. He traces the genealogy of justice to the primitive exchange relation, "justice on the

⁶ I use the English term "resentment" and the French term "*Ressentiment*" to distinguish between two stages of the evolution of the same phenomenon.

elementary level is the good will among parties of approximately equal power to come to terms with one another, to reach an 'understanding' by means of a settlement" (Nietzsche 1967, 70; emphasis added).

There is another sense in which Nietzsche's view of subjectivity can be considered radical. He rejected the Enlightenment idea of science and reason as the "vehicle" of modern subjectivity. As a matter of fact he thought of these as the obstacle on the way to subjectivity. Only art, the Dionysian dimension, could lead to emancipation.

Nietzsche viewed the major consequence of modernity as the loss of meaning, or in his parlance nihilism. However, his view of nihilism was "dialectical" in that he both feared and celebrated it as the destiny of Europe in the next two hundred years (Nietzsche 1967, 161). His dialectical view of nihilism is embodied in the opposite ways in which he regarded the loss of meaning. On the one hand he considered nihilism to be the opposite of the will to power--the quest for subjectivity (Nietzsche 1967, 157). On the other hand, nihilism for him meant the loss of three things: a) belief in a Telos; b) belief in unity, and; c) belief in truth (Nietzsche 1968, 12-13). These losses meant a departure from a belief in essences, utopias, and overarching and totalizing systems of truth. It is in this sense that Nietzsche paved the way for the contemporary postmodernist critics in the nineteenth century.

Althusser: Ambiguity of the Subject

Is there in the West a real individual subject? After all the historical processes--i.e., the Renaissance, the Reformation, capitalism, the democratic revolutions, the scientific and industrial revolutions--has there emerged an autonomous, self-willing and self-defining individual subject in its universality? These are the questions to which Althusser has responded in his important essay, "Ideology and the State" (Althusser 1971, 127-83).

A part of his answer lies in the concept of "interpellation" or "hailing". By these Althusser means something very close to Gramsci's notion of hegemony in which the individual is, without the use of force, brought to a "make a statement" or believe in certain state of affairs as true and that s/he is the "author" of such "statement".

According to Althusser, the individual is an accomplice in the fabrication of the illusion that s/he is a subject,

The duplicate mirror structure of ideology ensures simultaneously:

1. the interpellation of "individual" as subject;
2. their subjection to the Subject;
3. the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subject's recognition of each other [universality] and finally the subject's recognition of himself;
4. the absolute guarantee that everything really is so and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right;

Amen- :so be it" (Althusser 1971, 180-81).

The result of this fourfold system of the "interpellation" of the subject is that the modern social system operates without much friction and individuals believe they are in a position of subjectivity. But the key to understand modern subjectivity is the ambiguity that the process of interpellation of the individual has proffered to subjectivity. Thus, in Althusser's words, the entire mystery in the concept of modern subjectivity,

lies in the first two moments of the quadruple system I have just discussed, or if you prefer in the ambiguity of the term subject. In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means: 1) a free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions, 2) a subjected being who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission. This last note gives us the meaning of this ambiguity, which is merely a reflection of the effect which produces it: the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection "all by himself! There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they "work all by themselves" (Althusser 1971, 181-82).

These are sobering insights into the actual state of subjectivity in the modern world. The much touted freedom of subjectivity in the modern world could be just an illusion to enthrall the individual. Nevertheless, Althusser's insights are only a partial representation of modernity and its potentials.

Modernity and Postmodernity

Wherever the two categories of modernity and postmodernity are discussed together, the question of whether there is an abrupt break between the two or that the latter is merely a phase of the former, is raised. The aim of this essay is not to address this question. Rather, here I will schematically discuss some of the aspects of the work of Fredric Jameson and Lyotard on postmodernity in conjunction with the analysis of modernity presented in this essay.

Jameson's analysis of postmodernity may be considered to be marked by three characteristics. First, in his account postmodernity is linked with the consumerist phase of capitalism. As a "Marxist," Jameson believes that the cultural phenomenon of postmodernism is firmly based on the "substructure" of late capitalism in its multinational and global phase which has expanded the scope and quality of consumerism enormously since the Second World War (Jameson 1984, 79-88).

The second characteristic of postmodernity, in Jameson's analysis, is the transformation of the modern solidity of "representation" (what Lyotard calls metanarratives such as science, reason, etc.) into simulacrum--a vague representation (Jameson 1984, 66). Thus, as the solidity of religious tradition and its understanding of the world has been shattered by modernity, in a parallel way, the "solid" representation of the world by means of science and reason, which replaced religion in modernity, is now shattered by the postmodern.

The third characteristic of postmodernity, according to Jameson, which is not unrelated to the second, can be described in terms of Lacan's analysis of the schizophrenic disjunction or "the break down of the signifying chain" (Jameson 1984, 71). The comprehensive, totalizing, temporally unified and cohesive processes of meaning, putatively characteristic of modernity, are subject to disintegration and fragmentation.

According to Jameson, in the postmodern era, there are certain consequences that accompany the above changes which result from the shift from modernity to postmodernity. In the postmodern era the, "alienation of the subject is displaced by the fragmentation of the subject" (Jameson 1984, 63). As we saw in the earlier parts of the present essay, "alienation" is the result of the denial of subjectivity in the "modern" era and simultaneously appears with the emergence of subjectivity. Here when Jameson assumes that the condition of alienation no longer applies to the present situation, he also implies that a measure of subjectivity is already achieved, but that it is fragmented.

The logical extension of this position is that when the schizophrenic disjunction becomes the norm as it replaces "alienation," it becomes a source of euphoria instead of the anxiety associated with alienation. As Jameson has put it,

I merely wanted to show, however, the way in which I have been calling schizophrenic disjunction or *écriture*, when it becomes generalized as a cultural style, ceases to entertain a necessary relationship to the morbid content we associate with terms like schizophrenia, and becomes available for more joyous

intensities, for precisely that euphoria which we saw displacing the older affects of anxiety and alienation (Jameson 1984, 74).

The logical conclusion of the disappearance of alienation and its displacement by the fragmentation of schizophrenic disjunction, in Jameson's account, is that in postmodernity the effort to transcend the given is abandoned. This is best manifested in postmodern architecture in which no longer, "protopolitical utopian transformation, is either expected or desired" (Jameson 1984, 81). In the same vein, in postmodern condition the spirit of critique is dead as the modern "luxury of the old-fashioned ideological critique," has become unavailable (Jameson 1984, 86).

However, in Jameson's scheme, the far-reaching consequence of postmodernity is the death of subject as a rebel -- every rebel if not "organized" is at least organizable. Thus, for example, the eccentric rebel as the bag person becomes the manageable and harmless, the "homeless" (Jameson 1991, 322). One might ask the question, Does this mean the death of the subject as such? Jameson does not provide a direct answer to this question, but judging from the structure of his thought on postmodernity, the phenomenon of the extinction of great men as subject does not imply the end of subjectivity as such. Rather, considering his thesis of the displacement of the alienated modern individual by the fragmented subject under the postmodern condition, one might infer that Jameson views subjectivity as something already accomplished so that it can be fragmented.

Yet, logically the two categories of alienated individual and fragmentation, even though they seem mutually exclusive, can exist side by side in contemporary society. The alienated individual of modernity who is deprived of its subjectivity--i.e., alienated--and the postmodern individual as subject but fragmented, are ideal types which inhabit the "postindustrial" societies of today.

Lyotard concurs with Jameson that the modern substitutes for the religious system of premodernity, what he calls the metanarratives such as reason, science, nation-states etc., are in the process of disintegration. However, he disagrees with Jameson in his claim that this "incredulity toward metanarratives" is a result of the consumerist and global multinationalization of capital (Lyotard 1984, 37-39). Rather, the metanarratives are inherently delegitimate from the very beginning (Lyotard 1984, 39). Scientific knowledge, for example, "cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all" (Lyotard 1984, 29).

Lyotard does not address the question of the genealogy of the metanarratives in the modern era. Thus he does not discuss the functions of the metanarratives as a response to the "dilemptions" which emerged with the subjectivity of modernity. What interests him is the totalizing effect that these metanarratives have had and the creation of the unitary subject which are neither convincing nor desirable for him.

Like Jameson, Lyotard diagnoses the emergence of the fragmented subjectivity and the loss of credulity toward the

metanarrative. But unlike Jameson who approaches postmodernity dialectically, Lyotard whole-heartedly embraces it as he declares war on totality and the unitary subject.

Part II. Iran's Experiment with Modernity

In this part I discuss Iran's intellectual encounter with modernity, beginning in the second half of the 19th century and continue until the emergence of the Islamic revolutionary discourse in the 1960s and the '70s. In chapter three I discuss the nature of the Iranian intellectual appropriation of the discourse of modernity in the second half of the 19th century by evaluating the works of some the most prominent thinkers of this period, against the theoretical insights that I attempted to explore in part one of this study. I will closely examine the works of five of the most important intellectual figures that contributed to the development of the socio-political discourse in Iran in the last decades of the 19th century, focusing on the ontological foundations of their discourse and the ramifications thereof in sociological terms. Then I move to a discussion of the discourse of the Constitutional movement at the turn of the century and an examination of some of the contending ideas underlying this very important movement.

Chapter 4 consists of several sections dealing with the different aspects of Iran's experiment with discourses of modernity in the 20th century before the ascendancy of the Islamic discourse. I will trace the events that lead to a unipolarization of the discourse and practice of modernity in which the positivist aspects of modernity take the upper hand at the expense of more democratic elements. Then I will discuss the responses of the different "leftist" groups in Iran to this development and focus on some of the particular elements in their own pursuit of a discourse of modernity.

Chapter 3
The Dawn of Modernity in Iran:
Positivist Subjectivity and Universalizable Subjectivity

Modernity struck Iran, as many other countries, in its most shocking and therefore awakening form, imperialism, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Qajar dynasty (1794-1925) inherited the semi-unified state of Iran from the Safavids (1501-1730) who had, for the first time after the Arab invasion of the seventh century, managed to re-unify Iran in the fifteenth century. The onslaught of modernity in early nineteenth century came in the form of military pressure and invasion, at first from the northern borders with imperial Russia and later from Britain in the middle of the 19th century. Russian expansionism, equipped with modern means of warfare easily defeated the ill-prepared Iranian army which relied for the most on tribal military forces and methods. The result was the humiliating treaties of Gulestan (1813) and Turkamanchai (1828) according to which Iran lost territory and areas of suzerainty in Transcaucasia as well as navigational rights for its warships in the Caspian Sea (Kazemzadeh 1991, 334).¹

The first substantive measure taken by the Iranian government to counter the hegemony of the modern West was the sending of

¹One can imagine the shock and humiliation of defeat felt by the Iranians when the Russian military of merely 2,260 warriors defeated the Iranian army of 30,000 in a battle which lasted only two days despite the valor displayed by the Iranians (Kazemzadeh 1991,334-8). See also Bina (1954,) for the text of these two treaties.

Iranian students to Europe and the employment of European experts, mostly military advisors. It is very instructive to pay attention to the purpose for which the early Iranians, obviously all men, were dispatched to England in 1815. Of the total number of five men sent by Abbas Mirza (d.1833), the Crown Prince and the commander of the Iranian army in the war against Russia, one was to study artillery, another engineering; a certain Mirza Ja'far was to study chemistry and Mirza Saleh to study languages while an artisan, Mohammad Ali was supposed to learn modern gun making (Farman Farmayan 1966, 121). Similarly, the list of the books ordered from France by the later Qajar premier, Haji Mirza Aghasi (d.1848) reveals the concern with the technical, scientific and military matters as well as such books as the Encyclopedia, works of Pascal and those of Descartes (Nateq 1988, 239 - 243). The interests in technical and scientific matters at this time undoubtedly reflect the intense concern with military matters and the desire to resist the military threat posed from Britain and Russia. This interest was so keen that one of the first questions Mohammad Shah (d.1847) asked the two French botanists visiting Iran in 1835, pertained to the state of military strength and the stability of the state in France (Nateq 1988, 108).

While the interest in the military and technological spheres seems to be of primary concern in Iran's early encounter with modernity, there is another type of interest and curiosity about the socio-political sphere, although lower in magnitude and intensity. Mirza Saleh, one of the earliest students sent by Abbas Mirza to study languages in England in 1815 cited the Magna Carta and "freedom of

people" as one of its principles (Adamiyat, 1961, 30). Mirza Saleh could not hide his enthusiasm for the House of Commons and the concept of representative democracy (Adamiyat, 1961, 30). He also provided an account of freedom of speech--probably the earliest of its kind in Iran-- as principles of the British Parliamentary system in the early 19th century (Adamiyat, 1961, 31). Thus, from the very beginning in Iran's encounter with modernity, we can see a duality where a strong interest in military/technological sphere exists side by side with a less strong appreciation of the socio-political institutions of democracy.

The same type of duality can be observed in the later reforms of Amir Kabir (d.1851), who despite the short tenure of his office as premier of Iran in the mid-nineteenth century initiated major institutions of reform in that country. One of the most important institutions of reform established by Amir Kabir was the polytechnic of Dar-Alfunun. As Fereydun Adamiyat has observed, Amir's primary motivation in building the polytechnic was to bring modern sciences and technology to Iran and to gain access to military sciences (Adamiyat 1983,353-4). The curriculum of the new polytechnic, taught by professors who were recruited mostly from Austria --to circumvent any possible imperialist manipulation by the Russians, the British and the French--consisted of the following subjects: "engineering, infantry, cavalry, artillery, medicine and surgery, mineralogy, and natural science including physics, chemistry and pharmacology" (Adamiyat 1983, 363). In addition to these primary subjects some other subjects, apparently of secondary importance, were taught at the school: history, geography,

cartography, traditional Persian medicine, mathematics, Persian language, Arabic, French and Russian (Adamiyat 1983, 363).

However, Amir Kabir's reforms also included interests in important reforms in the socio-political sphere. He is quoted as having said he had "contemplated a constitution" for Iran after he was dismissed by the Shah (Adamiyat 1977, 15).² Amir Kabir also took the initial steps to reform the judiciary system, the result of which was the establishing of new civil courts and the protection of religious minorities in particular (Farman Farmayan 1966, 128). He was also responsible for the publishing of the first regular newspaper in Iran with the intention of "enlightening and educating the people of Persia, whether nobles, merchants, peasants or government officials" (Farman Farmayan 1966, 128).

Thus from the very beginning of Iran's encounter with the modern world, we can see a dual approach to modernity. On the one hand, there is a strong interest in the appropriation of modern western "technique" in general and on the other hand, there is some desire and curiosity for new ideas and institutions of civil society. It is the intention of this chapter to demonstrate and explicate this dual nature of the appropriation of modernity on Iran and the importance of its consequences for its history. To be sure, this duality in the appropriation of modernity in Iran reflected the very same duality that modernity had exhibited in its European birthplace. Therefore, in Iran also, we observe a positivist interpretation of subjectivity as

²Amir Kabir's reforms were perceived to be so "radical" that they posed a severe threat to the power of the Qajar court elite and the clergy. He was dismissed by the shah only after two years in office as the premier of Iran and murdered by the shah's order after a short time.

well as, and side by side with, what can be designated as a "universalizable subjectivity". The notion of progress for example is of pivotal importance in both European and Iranian contexts. But, in the positivist interpretation, progress is codified as the development of science and technology and their application to the social sphere, whereas in universalizable subjectivity the notion of progress refers more to the possibility of democratic change and transformation of the oppressive institutions where the concept of critique plays a central role. The same duality is expressed in the notion of law. According to the positivist interpretation, law is viewed primarily as order, regulation and codification. In contrast, "positive law" manifests the universalizability of freedom and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the notion of government by consent and consensus.³ At the institutional level, the same dichotomy is displayed in the difference between the interest in merely an efficient bureaucracy such as the creation of *Majlis Tanzimat* [Organization Assembly] on the one hand, and the set up of parliamentary constitution and representative assembly on the other.

Both of those tendencies had also appropriated the idea of the nation-state and nationalism from the modern West. But, while the positivist tendencies placed more emphasis on a notion of nationalism based on ethnic and historical identity (in this case the Aryan and Pre-Islamic identity of Iran), the universalizable approach leaned more towards a notion of nationalism based upon

³ Here, "positive law" should not be confused with positivist interpretation of law, despite the common etymology, since they are used in an opposite sense in this context.

popular sovereignty within the confines of a nation-state. It is absolutely crucial to realize that both interpretations of modernity were simultaneously expressed in the discourses promulgated in the second part of the 19th century that I am going to examine in this chapter. Indeed, each of the theories that we will encounter in this period embodied both of these approaches at the same time, while each emphasized different aspects of each tendency to a different degree.

Before we go on to a discussion of the themes which emerge in the dual approach to modernity in late 19th century Iran, it is necessary to elaborate about the conditions which lead to the dichotomy of what I have termed "positivist subjectivity" and "universalizable subjectivity". As I mentioned before, this was partly a reflection of the same dichotomy in the birthplace of modernity in Europe. However, what contributed to this dualistic appropriation of modernity in Iran was the impact of foreign imperialism on the one hand and domestic despotism on the other hand.⁴ Obviously, the foreign imperialist encroachment toward Iran which often accompanied military intervention could not but result in an interest in a positivist appropriation of European subjectivity. Here, the inaction of the domestic despotism and its inability to counter the European hegemony, had two results. Partially it reinforced the interest in positivist subjectivity, but partially it gave rise to a consciousness about the nature of despotism in Iran and seeking for

⁴ For a discussion of the centrality of despotism in Iranian history, see Katouzian 1981.

ways to distribute the power invested and concentrated in despotism which lead to an interest in universalizable subjectivity.

Malkum Khan: Positivist Law and Positive Law

The concept of *Qanun* or Law emerged from a central theme in the socio-political discourse of the late 19th century among the leading advocates of reform in the Qajar Iran. Mirza Malkum Khan (1833-1908) was one of the earliest and most influential theorists in the late 19th century who systematically addressed issues pertaining to modernity in Iran. He was born into an Armenian family in Esfahan. He was sent to France to study engineering on a state scholarship. It was there that he developed an interest in political philosophy and especially in Saint Simon's ideas about social engineering as well as in August Comte's Religion of Humanity. Upon returning to Iran he ostensibly converted to Islam, securing a teaching job for himself at the recently established polytechnic of Dar Alfunun. Soon thereafter he created a semi-secret association modeled on European freemasonry but unrelated to it and engaged in a campaign to persuade the Shah and the court elite to initiate modern reforms chiefly based on the Ottoman notion of organization, *Tanzimat* (Abrahamian, 1982, 65-6). Initially, Naser al-Din Shah received his proposal for reform positively, but soon became suspicious of Malkum's intentions and exiled him to Turkey. After that Malkum's life and career were characterized by sequences of patronage and disfavor by the Shah for his ideas for reform; until the last decade of the 19th century, when he lost his ambassadorship to Britain, he became a radical critic of the political situation in Iran and

published his famous and influential newspaper *Qanun*, meaning law, in London.⁵

Malkum's discourse on modernity embodied the dual approach discussed above. On the one hand, he advocated the wholesale importation of European bureaucracy and its Ottoman model (*Tanzimat*) and, on the other hand, he displayed some interests in at least rudimentary forms of democratic institutions and much more so in their ontological foundations. He equated progress with the principles of order and organization,

If we want to find the path to progress through our own mental exercises we have to wait for three thousand years. The Europeans have discovered the road to progress and principles of organization just as they have discovered the principle of the telegraph during the past two or three thousand years and have developed certain formulas for these principles (Malkum 1948,13).

He then went on to recommend the "installation" of "principles of organization". Just as we can obtain the telegraph from Europe and install it in Tehran without wasting time, it is as impossible to discover the telegraph on our own and likewise with principles of organization (Malkum 1948, 13). Malkum's obsession with the principle of organization is in turn reflective of his idea about lack of a strong administrative system in Iran in the 19th century, "in a nut shell, we do not have an 'executive apparatus' in Iran and as long as we do not set up this principal apparatus, all our words and writings are entirely futile and a source of disgrace". Malkum also seems to

⁵For a detailed but hostile account of Malkum's career and life see Hamid Algar 1973.

have developed a very strong impression of the efficiency of European bureaucracy, especially the state bureaucracy. The Europeans, in his view, had not only developed factories for the production of objects, they had also developed factories for the production of "humans". Just as in the first type of factory, in which from one end enter raw materials and from the other end come the products, there are human factories where into one end are poured ignorant children and from the other end engineers and perfect thinkers come out. Then Malkum extends his factory analogy to explain the working of the European legal system and modern banking in terms of "production" of justice and money (Malkum Khan 1948a, 10-11). But, the most impressive of these second types of "factory" for Malkum Khan was the "state apparatus",

In Europe, among these human factories, they have one factory which is located at the center of the government and animates all other factories. This great apparatus is called the apparatus of bureaucracy. Anyone who is interested in knowing what miracles human reason is capable of [producing] should investigate this apparatus of bureaucracy. The organization, welfare, prosperity, and the greatness and the entire progress of Europe depends on the proper organization of this apparatus (Malkum Khan 1948a, 11).

Malkum also expressed the urgent need for reform in the Iranian military as he referred to the Iranian defeat at the hands of Russia in 1813 and 1828 (Malkum Khan 1948b, 89). However, he pointed out that the success in the military reform was contingent upon the state apparatus becoming organized (Malkum Khan 1948b, 90). Malkum's interest in "organization" (*Nazm*) which bordered on obsession was

typical of his age and very prevalent in the region.⁶ Yet, this obsession stemmed from the reality of imperialist onslaught facing Iran and the entire region,

The government of Iran in facing the encroachment of European hegemony is not any different from the Ottoman government...The point is that the surge in the power of Europe has made the survival of barbarian governments impossible. From now on, all governments of the earth must be organized like European governments or they will be conquered and subjugated by them (Malkum Khan 1948b,95).

Malkum conceived that the pre-condition for acquiring Western bureaucratic organization rested on modern sciences and technology. He thought the misfortune of the previous rulers of Iran was due to their ignorance of the new sciences and technologies. He pointed out that the reason for the success of Japan had been the sympathetic attitudes of its statesmen to modern science, even though they did not have the formal training in the sciences. He then concluded that while, "in Tahmasb Shah's time the organization of affairs rested on 'natural reason', the contemporary organization of all European governments rest entirely on science" (Adamiyat 1961,117).

Malkum Khan's later discourse in the 1880s and 1890s specifically focused on the role of law in response to Naser Al Din Shah's intransigent despotism and his inability to counter Western

⁶The concept of *Tanzimat* first emerged in the Ottoman empire as the reforms initiated there were designated by this term. It is derived from the word *nazm* in Arabic meaning order.

hegemony.⁷ Very much in tune with the positivist aspect of his views manifested as we saw above in his emphasis on order and organization, Malkum presented a very instrumental view of the role of law as a means to counter hegemonic force against foreign domination of Iran. In an article in his newspaper, *Qanun*, he discussed the Russians' utilization of bureaucratic institutionalization of power to their advantage without limiting the power of the Emperor as a model for the Iranian state,

The maximum power imaginable is concentrated in the hands of the Russian Emperor. But despite such a dominating power he is not able to mete out punishment on anyone without the order of the [judicial] bureaucracy. No one has placed any limitations on the Emperor's power. The Emperor himself owing to his education and enlightened knowledge willingly has made the enactment of laws and observations thereof, the basis of his splendor. The Emperor has made himself, more than anyone else, obedient to the law since obeying the law has given him dominance over twenty "lawless" kings (Malkum Khan 1890).

The above passage might be interpreted as a ruse by Malkum to encourage the Shah to give up some of his power, but it is also a strong move towards the establishment of in the state apparatus in Iran. This seems to be one of the earliest theoretical attempts to replace the autocratic rule of despotism with bureaucratic rule. As we will see in the next chapter, with the advent of the Pahlavi

⁷Malkum Khan's motivations for his critique of Naser Al Din Shah's despotism were not entirely altruistic. His personal vexation toward the Shah for dismissing him as his ambassador to Britain after the lottery fiasco was equally strong. See Algar 1973.

Dynasty, despotism and bureaucratic rationality were combined to institutionalize the state power in the hands of Pahlavi monarchs. To institutionalize his ideas regarding this conception of law, Malkum proposed the creation of an "Organizational Assembly" (*Majlis Tanzimat*). But he was careful to point out that this type of assembly had nothing to do with a parliamentary system and a representative assembly, about which the court ministers attempted to create confusion to discourage the Shah from instituting such reforms. Malkum charged this Organizational Assembly with the task of creating laws for the country. It is instructive briefly to examine his understanding of this type of law. In his monograph *Daftar Qanun* (Book of Law) he wrote, "Every injunction which is issued from the legal apparatus [*dastgah qanun*] in accordance with a 'determined agreement' is called law, and it is necessary for this law to be definitely issued by the legal apparatus (Malkum Khan 1949c,138). What is of crucial significance in this passage is the phrase "determined agreement" (*qarar mo'ayan*) because while the agreement stems from the non- representative assembly of the *Majlis Tanzimat*, it nevertheless contains the seminal concept of contract and therefore the potentiality of a conception of law based on consensus of citizens. This view is reflected later in Malkum's discourse in a letter written to Mirza Nasorallah Khan Moshirulduleh dated May 28, 1903. Malkum argued,

World history in the course of five thousand years has proved that the "essence" of human reason does not manifest itself except through the interplay of discourse and consensus of opinion. According to an eternal principle,

justice, security, progress and prosperity and the entire benefits of life have never appeared in any part of the world except through the practice of consultation (Adamiyat 1961,121).

Such a view is in turn contingent upon a conception of basic rights of the individual which expressed in an essay entitled, "The Straight Path" (*Serat Mostaqim*) in 1881. In this essay Malkum asserted the four basic principles of human rights as security, freedom (*ekhtiyar* or *azadi*), equality and achieved status. He divided security into the security of the person and that of property. He also elaborated on the concept of freedom by distinguishing such categories as the freedom of the body, speech, pen, thought, business (*kasb*) and association.

It is important to note that underlying Malkum's conceptualization of freedom there is an ontological foundation of human subjectivity. He wrote,

The nobility of our creation lies in [God's] having created us as subjects (*Fa'el Mokhtar*) and because of his nobility has made us agents who through our reason and effort [*ijtihad*] are owners and protectors of our "rights of humanness" [i.e., human rights] (Malkum 1948d,215).

He then goes on to theorize about the "alienation" of this subjectivity and its restoration,

Our great sin and [cause of] our misfortune is that we have totally lost this nobility and this sacred agency, and for centuries, we have begged others for our rights instead of seeking them in ourselves (Malkum Khan 1948d, 215).

The term *Malkum Khan* used to express his concept of subjectivity was "*adamiyat*". Rooted in the Semitic languages the term *adam*, meaning human being, was used by Khan as a familiar term in Islamic culture to popularize his concept of subjectivity. He contended that according to all religions and moral philosophies God has created us as *adam* and as a proof of our being *adam* has made every individual human being the inheritor of grand gifts which may collectively be called the "rights of being *adam*"⁸ (*Malkum Khan* 1948d, 214). One of the most important aspects of his discourse on being *adam* in *Malkum's* writings was its implications for the concept of justice. For centuries in the Middle East, the idea of justice was contingent upon the advice to political rulers to restrain their oppressions of their subjects. *Malkum* attempted to reverse the concept of justice by broaching the idea that to achieve justice it was incumbent upon the oppressed not to tolerate oppressors and to overthrow them (*Adamiyat* 1961,213).

Concurrent with the publication of the newspaper *Qanun* in 1890s, *Malkum* was also responsible for the foundation of the League of Humanity, (*Jam' Adamiyat*) an organization devoted to the propagation of his views, especially those pertaining to raising consciousness about the rights of citizens. While in exile, *Malkum's* influence was mostly intellectual and the organization was run by his sympathizers in Tehran and other cities.⁹ There seems to be little

⁸Writing in a mostly religious milieu, *Malkum* here expressed the concept of subjectivity as "mediated subjectivity". As we will see in Chapter 5 and 6, some Islamic approaches to subjectivity have been couched in terms of mediated subjectivity, following *Malkum's* precedent.

⁹See *Fereydun Adamiyat*(1961) for a detailed account of the League of Humanity and its members.

doubt that Malkum's ideas about *adamiyat* or being a human, as he understood the notion of subjectivity, as well as the League of Humanity were both not much influenced by August Comte's notion of Religion of Humanity (Adamyat 1961,200). Yet despite the strong positivist element, the League was a crucial institution in the propagation of the idea of the rights of the individual citizen during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909. As a matter of fact, this characteristic of the League further corroborates the thesis regarding the dual nature of approaches of the Iranian theorists discussed here toward modernity. In a similar vein, the positivist aspect of Malkum's ontology was manifested in his very mechanical approach towards the raising of consciousness about human rights since, as we saw before, he proposed to "produce" such humans by establishing "human making factories" (*karkhaneh adam sazi*).

Malkum's discourse also was also concerned with questions pertaining to the social universal and issues regarding the rights of the public. Very often he invoked familiar Islamic concepts and practices to explain his new ideas. This practice had the effect of being able to reach as many Iranians as possible rather than just a small elite.¹⁰ Similarly, even though his conceptualization of law, as we saw above, was marred by strong positivist elements, nevertheless it was law with universal application. As he put it, "the law, all over the nation of Iran and regarding every individual

¹⁰This issue is distorted by Hamid Algar to portray Malkum's intentions as hypocritical in using religion to advance his own political views and career. While there were many flaws in Malkum's character, it seems that Hamid Algar advanced this point from a religious conviction rather than a critical analysis. See Algar 1973.

Iranian subject is equal" (Malkum Khan 1948a, 26). Another aspect of universality which Malkum addressed was achieved status instead of ascribed status, which he recommended especially as the sole criteria for recruitment in government services and the military (Malkum Khan 1948b, 75).

In Malkum's discourse there are no attempts to distinguish between the two aspects of modernity which I have designated as positivist and universalizable subjectivity. In fact, his discourse is mostly a mixed bag of the two, while as time passed he moved closer toward a conception of universalizable subjectivity. This mixture of the two aspects is best captured in his concise formulation of what law should be: "The law should reflect the emperor's will and guarantee the public interest" (Malkum Khan 1948a, 25). While this statement indicated a step toward the limitation of the arbitrary will of the Shah and the achievement of popular sovereignty, the ambiguity contained within it reflects a very similar ambiguity regarding the responsibilities of the Shah and popular sovereignty in the Iranian constitution of 1906.

While Malkum Khan's discourse focused primarily on the questions pertaining to the political and legal sphere, the epistemological questions as well as ideas about national identity were prominent in the works of Kermani, another influential thinker of the 19th century in the Iranian sphere of influence.¹¹

¹¹ Malkum Khan was not the only person at the time to focus on political-legal questions and conceptualizations of law. The treaties of Another contemporary thinker, Mirza Yusef Khan Mustashar al-Duleh, entitled *Yek Kalameh* (One Word) referred to the law as the key in opening Iran's door to modernity and was also influential. The arguments advanced in this book are in close parallel to those of Malkum Khan, but in general have more religious overtones. Of much interest is Mustashar al-Duleh's invocation of the Quranic

Kermani: Epistemological Concerns and National Identity

Despite his unsystematic method, Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani may be considered one of the earliest thinkers in Iran who paid serious attention to philosophical questions and epistemological issues of modernity in the 19th century. Again, in his discourse we can observe a mixture of positivist and potentially emancipatory types of subjectivity. The first modern western philosophical book translated into Persian was Descartes' Discourse on Reason which was published in 1860 (Adamiyat 1978, 73). But Kermani seems the first person in Iran to attempt to ground Iranian thought in modern western philosophical tenets. He also seems to be one of the earliest theorists of modern nationalism in Iran who tried to create a pre-Islamic national identity for Iran.

Abul Hussein Khan, later to be known as Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, was born in 1853 in a small village near the town of Kerman in central Iran. His diverse family background seems to have had a direct impact on his education. On both his the mother's and father's sides his immediate ancestors were prominent members of Sufi orders. His mother's grandfather was a prominent Zoroastrian leader who later in his life had converted to Islam. Kermani could also boast of famous physicians, prominent judges and long established aristocrats among his ancestors, and one of his orthodox grandfathers had been murdered by a *fatwa* issued by an orthodox mulla (Adamiyat 1978, 14). As Mangol Bayat has observed such a

verse Al Asra' 70 to construct a "mediated subjectivity" where humans are depicted as God's vice-regent on earth. See Mustashar al-Duleh 1985, 55.

diverse background must have had a deep influence on Kermani's philosophical and political views (Bayat 1974, 30).

Kermani received a traditional Iranian education including Persian literature, Arabic, Islamic history and "schools of thought", Islamic Jurisprudence and Hadith (sayings attributed to the prophet and Imams), mathematics, logic, philosophy and mysticism and traditional medicine. Among his teachers in philosophy and "sciences" (*tabiiyat*) was the renowned Iranian philosopher Haji Sabzevari. Later, Kermani learned French and some English as well as Pre-Islamic languages of Iran (Adamiyat 1978, 14). When he was about 30 years of age, as a result of a fierce disagreement with the governor of Kerman, he secretly fled his home town and gained asylum in Istanbul to escape extradition attempts by Kerman's governor. In Istanbul Kermani became more familiar with new ideas and philosophies as he associated with different intellectual and political circles in the Ottoman capital. During this period he and his close lifetime associate, Sheik Ahmad Ruhi, married the two daughters of Subh Azal.¹² Kermani's life ended tragically when he and Ruhi were extradited to Iran for allegedly plotting the assassination of Naser Al-Din Shah in 1896 and were put to death in the same year.

Kermani considered a seminal status for philosophy as a "sublime and universal science". Philosophy to him was, "to know the truth of objects and beings according to the original and natural order". He

¹² After the bloody repression of the Babi movement in mid 19th century, the movement was split into two. One was led by Subh Azal who remained closer to the doctrines of the Babi movement and the other was led by Azal's half-brother, Bahauallah who founded the Bahai religion as a new dispensation.

further believed that the purpose of philosophy was the "elimination of chaos [stemming from] the darkness of ignorance and achievement of rational order and entrance into the lightness of truth"¹³ (Adamiyat 1978, 76). He also thought of this "noble science" as the primal cause of the "movement of thought" and "transformation of nations from barbarous primitiveness to the worlds of civilization and urbanity". Without philosophy, he contended, no real result from any other science could be obtained (Adamiyat 1978, 76). Kermani's assessment of classical Greek philosophy reveals some interesting points about his own discourse. Kermani fancied himself as an arch materialist and as such praised Socrates for "bringing down philosophy from the sky to the earth", but since Socrates' philosophical approach posited the subject as the center of the enterprise of knowledge instead of giving priority to the matter, Kermani was more interested in the Greek "materialist" philosophers such as Pythagoras, Democritus and Heraclitus (Adamiyat 1978, 77).

Despite such a preference, Kermani in his own positivist fashion acknowledged the centrality of human subjectivity in relation to matter. This "bipedal animal," he argued, like all beings follows the laws of matter, but since in his relations with matter and nature he intervenes in them, he deviates from the laws of nature. This fact, he thought, was observable as a result of human "interpolation" (*tasaruf*) into nature. Through experience, he claimed, we realize that

¹³Event though Kermani was a prolific writer and twenty books and treatises were attributed to him, very few of his works have been published and of these many are not available. A secondary, Fereydun Adamiyat's *Andishehaye Mirza Aqa khan Kermani* (Thoughts of Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani), seems to be a through representation of his works. I have used it as a major, but not the only, source for this section.

social institutions which are created by human reason, more often than not are not compatible with laws of nature (Adamiyat 1978, 99). Yet, Kermani reduced the human body to chemical compounds and considered the workings of human the mind to be a physical function of the central nervous system. There are "nerves" in the human brain which are most of the time in a state of motion, and "thought and reflection appear as a result of their movement" (Adamiyat 1978, 99).

In accordance with his materialist formulation of subjectivity, Kermani accounted for the perennial nature of despotism Iran in geographic terms, and yet considered the freedom of the individual and thought as essential (Adamiyat 1978, 173). In his treatise, Inshallah Mashallah Kermani criticized Iranians for abandoning human volition and resorting to metaphysical explanation for events and the power of providence. Muslims, he thought, instead of acting on the world want to influence the course of events by uttering phrases such as *Inshallah* or God willing. The same fatalistic inaction, he argued, which sealed the fate of Byzantine Christians during the siege of Constantinople also caused the defeat of Iranians in their confrontations with the Afghan invaders (Adamiyat 1978, 200-2). Indeed the supreme God has designated a means for achieving every goal and has left the welfare of humankind to the personal efforts of individuals (Adamiyat 1978, 201). In a book called *Rezvan* (Paradise) following the tradition in Persian literature of debating a hypothetical opponent, Kermani contrasted human volition and freedom and the idea of providence. He admonished his hypothetical opponent by claiming that,

The human essence is always open to progress and unlimited perfection so that the pure God [*Haq*] has esteemed and privileged it, but its progress or decline is entirely dependent on the will of the self [*nafs*] and his effort (Adamiyat 1978, 200).

Kermani, in his book *Ayne Sekandari*, also condemned submission to the terrestrial powers: "Deterministically, Iranians attribute the adversity or prosperity in the world to the will of the Shahs and do not consider themselves as having any role in the changes of the realm. They do not fancy themselves as the origin of any influence in the world". Then in a footnote he added the, "reason why the Iranian nation has not progressed in any field is this very false attitude which derives from the existence of powerlessness or laziness so that Iranians do not consider themselves participants in the rights of the nation" (Kermani 1906, 47).

This view of subjectivity in Kermani's discourse leads to a theory of nationalism based on a collectivist interpretation of subjectivity. The foil against which he attempted to create a collective nationalist subject were the Arabs and Islam. The Iranians, he maintained, never accepted Arab and Islamic rulers willingly, and all of the rulers of Iran ruled by bloodshed and oppression. According to this analysis, the politics of oppression is both corrupt and corrupting. It has corrupted the Iranians because a people living under oppression and terror will lose its courage and virtue and lethal diseases such as fear, cowardice, deception, hypocrisy, and sycophancy befall them. Thus Arabs and Islamic domination of Iran robbed Iranians of their

"ethos of superiority, magnanimity and nobility" (Adamiyat 1978, 202).

Kermani's portrayal of Arabs is characterized by chauvinist and racist epithets and a pseudo-scientific approach. He used the adjectives "ignorant, savage lizard eaters, bloodthirsty, barefoot, camel riders, desert-dwelling nomads" to describe Arabs whom he regarded as the cause of Iran's misery ever since their conquest of Iran in the seventh century (Bayat 1974, 45-47). Thus in conformity with his positivistic side, he applied 19th century racist theories of phrenology to distinguish the Arabs and Jews as Semites from the Iranians as Aryans by their respective physical features (Bayat 1974, 45-47).

Kermani's solution to this national "alienation" of collective subjectivity at the hands of the Arabs and Islam was a return to the pre-Islamic religion of Iran, Zoroastrianism, and the glories of Iran's pre-Islamic dynasties (Bayat 1974, 48).¹⁴ Yet it is important to note that his reconstruction of ancient Iran as a source of cultural identity was not unidimensional. While he praised the state religion Zoroastrianism of ancient Iran and the principle of the Shah's rights and people's duty to obey him as one of the pillars of Iran's prosperity, he also paid much attention to Mazdak, the radical prophet of Iran in the late fifth century, for his egalitarian and republican ideas (Bayat 1974, 48).

As I mentioned before, Kermani's views on the mode of modernization in Iran were very much influenced by his positivist

¹⁴As we will see in Chapter Four, after the triumph of positivist modernity in Iran with the advent the Pahlavi dynasty, Iranian nationalism drew heavily on the themes of pre-Islamic civilization here discussed by Kermani.

epistemology. He was aware of the positivist school of thought among European "isms", and mentioned it by name (Adamiyat 1978, 78). The appropriation of natural science methods and paradigms and their application to social and political discourse which was very prevalent in the West at that time also influenced his writing and thought. Thus, he believed that, not only does the process of thinking stem from the physical activity of the central nervous system, but also both internal perception and external phenomena were determined by mechanical principles. As he put it, "geometric equation and arithmetic operations [have become] the guide and the measure of subjective and objective states" (Adamiyat 1978, 100). The simultaneous presence of positivist and potentially emancipatory elements in Kermani's discourse are evident in his abstraction on the ontology of movement. He posited that originally human material existence had been unified with the material existence of vegetables and animals, but they are separate now. The essence of animal and human existence, he thought, lies in perception and movement. But this movement ,in his view, was constituted of wheels and mechanical instruments and means of electrical movement (Adamiyat 1978, 89). Thus, in contrast to the static view of traditional ontology, Kermani's ontological view of movement portends a dynamic perception of human existence. Drawing on the 17th century famous Iranian philosopher Mulla Sadra , Kermani presented a view of change in terms of "transformation of essence" (*Harekat Juhari*) (Adamiyat 1978, 96). But at the same time Kermani exposed this very dynamism to the danger of degradation by subjecting it to positivist determinism and a social Darwinist

interpretation (Adamiyat 1978, 96-97). As a result, Kermani's positivist ontology leads to a lopsided emphasis on a "developmentalist" approach to modernization and reduction of human subjectivity to Faustian dimensions. For example, he considered a society civilized only if, "it can provide its necessities for life and the means for its livelihood, more or less. Ultimately, the more perfect a civilization, the more developed its means of livelihood would be" (Adamiyat 1978, 106). Similarly, he articulated an interestingly futuristic and Faustian view of human intervention in nature as human agency. According to him, the "ignorant lowly primitive" human has now reached a stage where,

he has made visible the stars...created artificial moonlight and inexhaustible rays [of light]...made ice from fire and from ice [made] electricity...and soon will have the audacity to intervene in the planets and contrive suns and stars from electricity and preserve planets from being destroyed; and start consorting and fraternizing with their inhabitants; and achieve an eternal life...and sit on the throne of happiness (Adamiyat 1978, 92).

Despite Kermani's strong positivist sides, his discourse also reveals a well developed critical streak. He focused on the state, religion and philosophy (*hekmat*). What is central to the state is force and intimidation (*tarsandan*). Religion on the other hand is primarily concerned with dogma (*bavarandan*) and belief. Among these only philosophy is concerned with understanding (*fahmandan*) through reasoning (*esteddal*) or better argument (Adamiyat 1978, 11-112).

Accordingly, he pursued an independent and critical attitude towards categories of knowledge,

I am proud that after hearing scattered discourses and consorting with different peoples and reading many books and works of many persons, without interrogation and close examination I did not merely imitate [them]...I walked with my own feet and observed with my own eyes...(Adamiyat 1978, 80).

He then paid homage to the Mu'tazalites, the early Islamic critical philosophers, for their application of the principle of doubt to every belief and for seeking reason and "incisive argumentation" (Adamiyat 1978, 81).

From this approach to critical attitude, Kermani extrapolated to forge a conception of positive law. If humans, he argued, are capable of managing a thousand affairs of their daily life, due to their independent consciousness and can, invent a thousand types of sciences, techniques and industries, they surely "would not be helpless [in creating] laws and practical ethics" (Adamiyat 1978, 120). As we saw before, Kermani must have been in favor of a universalization of the process of law making since he thought the people must be "participants in the rights of the nation". In his famous treatise *Haftadu Du mellat* (Seventy Two Peoples) Kermani criticized all religions and sects known to him for their particularity, marginalization of the non-faithful and the heterodox as well as those condemning those societies based on a caste system. Significantly, he concluded this essay by reflecting on the comments

of an Indian Pariah praising the universality of the modern legal system as practiced in Britain (Kermani 1983, 118-121).¹⁵

In general Kermani's discourse was quite complicated and contained two elements of modernity discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This duality in the discourse of Kermani is symbolically captured in his praise for human volition, but which he saw embodied in Napoleon (Adamiyat 1978, 294-5). Even though most of his works were not published during his lifetime, his influence on the intellectual process and the consequent political events in Iran was very important.

While the core of Kermani's work consisted of foundational issues of ontological and epistemological significance as well as the question of national identity, our next discussion pertains to the domain of culture as thematized by Akhundzadeh.

Akhundzadeh: Culture and Cultural Change

In many respects the work and lifetime occupations of Akhundzadeh closely parallel the themes which preoccupied Kermani. However, perhaps because of the different cultural milieus within which each worked, their thematic emphasis are also different. Just like Kermani, Akhundzadeh was writing from the outside of the Iranian borders, in the Caucasus, which in his adolescence, was annexed by Russia in the treaty of 1828. As a result of the subsequent uprising and its suppression, the Caucasus

¹⁵This should not be interpreted as Kermani's insensitivity to problems of imperialism and colonization. He had many harsh words for western colonization and exploitation of the East. Indeed, one can observe in his discourse the embryonic stages of discontent towards modernity as a response to colonization. See Adamiyat 1978, 288-9.

witnessed the creation a fertile intellectual atmosphere where the Russian exiles were very active in forging a revolutionary discourse and emphasizing cultural themes in its development.

Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (1812-1878) was born in the village of Nukheh near the town of Shaki in the southern part of the Caucasus. When he was very young, Akhundzadeh's mother separated from his father and his education came under the supervision of his mother's uncle who was a man of letters. When he was 19 years old he started studying logic and theology(*fiqh* and *usul*) with a mullah of heterodox leanings who dissuaded him from pursuing a career as a cleric (Adamiyat 1970, 143). Later he attended a Russian school for one year in 1833. A year later he was employed as a translator in Tbilisi, where he became familiar with diverse and avant-garde intellectual circles and was integrated into the rich cultural milieu of that city. Then he became familiar with some of the most prominent contemporary Russian thinkers such as Gogol and Pushkin (Adamiyat 1979, 19). He was also exposed to the French Enlightenment, though it was indirect and through Russian translation (Sanjabi 1995, 39). Akhundzadeh's intellectual work may be divided into three relatively distinct periods. At first he wrote plays and a novel, all promoting a spirit of social critique. Then he switched his attention to the question of alphabet reform as a means of a colossal cultural change to be achieved through mass education. When disappointed by the idea of alphabet reform as a means of achieving cultural change, he turned his efforts to a campaign for religious reform to create a mass scale change in the culture. It was during this period which he wrote his book The

Letters of Kam al-Duleh and tried to publish it, without any success, until his death.¹⁶ Akhundzadeh in his early phase thought that the time for classical Persian literary style, represented in the famous *Gulestan* by Sa'di and *Zinal Majalis* had lapsed and now the most effective means of cultural change would be that of *drama* and *novel* which is part of *drama* (Adamiyat 1970, 54).

Akhundzadeh also advocated the use of satire as a means of critical social analysis in preference to the traditional style of heavy emphasis on exhortation and pontification. In a later phase of the development of his thought on this issue he wrote,

kritika [critique] is not written without fault finding, scolding, and without satire and mocking. The Letters of Kamaldulleh is *kritika* and not preaching and exhortation. A truth written in the style of preaching, exhortation and [couched in] patronizing and paternalistic [terms] would never have any effect on human nature which is used to malefaction. Human nature always loathes reading and hearing preachings and sermons but is eager to read *kritika* (Akhundzadeh 1978, 206).

This new approach to literature by Akhundzadeh reveals two important elements of his work and thought. First, that he was aware of the enormous potential of literature for any notion of cultural change. Second and more important, however, was his realization that authoritarianism contained in the old style of exhortation and sermonizing was anti-democratic and therefore his

¹⁶For a full biographical account of Akhundzadeh's life and intellectual development see Adamiyat 1970 and his autobiography in Akhundzadeh 1972.

choice of satire as a more democratic means of achieving his cultural goals.

This emphasis on culture, it seems, derived from a turning point in the appropriation of modernity by Iranian intellectuals of late 19th century. Reflecting a sense of disappointment with the stress on the adoption of technical aspects of modern West epitomized in the process *Tanzimat*, Akhundzadeh came to believe that the failure of Islamic nations in their efforts to modernize was due to their privileging of technical and practical elements of European progress over theoretical aspects of progress (Akhundzadeh 1978, 289).

Akhundzadeh stated that "people must be prepared for the acceptance of European thoughts. European thoughts [implanted in the minds of the people of Iran] must be prior to trade with Europe and their products" (Adamiyat 1970, 165).

In order to achieve such "preparation" and cultural transformation, Akhundzadeh focused on two closely related issues. He proposed the ideas of the alphabet and later script reforms as a means of rapid increase in mass literacy. Reasoning that the Arabic-Persian script, because of its connected letters, has hampered the spread of literacy among Islamic peoples, he proposed first the modification of the Arabic-Persian writing system and later the adoption of a modified form of Latin script.¹⁷ He also raised the related issue of universal education for all as the most important means of modernization of Islamic countries. Keenly aware of the importance of the universality of modern education, Akhundzadeh

¹⁷For a full discussion of Akhundzadeh's proposals for reform of the alphabet and script see Akhundzadeh 1978 .

criticized the confinement of literacy to urbanites and the depriving of those in the countryside. Just as it was the case in Prussia and America, he proclaimed, all men and women should receive education so that the public can benefit (Adamiyat 1970, 81). There is little doubt that these ideas were of potentially emancipatory value in the Middle Eastern and Iranian context. However Akhundzadeh in conjunction with this possibility of liberation also introduced an element of "force" along the concept of education which has been adopted by the Iranian educational system and has vitiated its universal emancipatory potential. The compulsory education he was proposing was the result of the decree from a great reformer such as Peter the Great or Frederick the Great rather than the consensual will of the population,

According to the law of Frederick the Great , the king, who is the defender of the country and protector of the nation, has the same authority over any child born to any of his subjects, as the father has over the child. Therefore if the king forces this child to learn reading and writing for his/her own good from age nine to age fifteen, this type of force cannot be called oppression, but indicates affection and love which as the saying has it is called "coercive benevolence" [*towfiq ejbari*] (Akhundzadeh 1978, 158).

One of the central concepts that Akhundzadeh developed was the notion of critique or as he called it *kritika*. Accordingly, he considered freedom of thought to be sine quo non for the achievement of *kritika*, as he believed that, eventually and gradually, "as a result of the interplay of discourses and of different ideas, truth

would come into focus". Similarly, as long as human societies do not offer,

freedom of thought to their individual members and force them to be content with what their forefathers and religious founders have established...without using their reason in the affairs of the community...these individuals would resemble the horses in a mill, rotating around pre-determined circle everyday..."(Adamiyat 1970,142).

Akhundzadeh's notion of freedom is constructed on the basis of a deeper and more radical notion of subjectivity which he, more than any other theorist among his peers and ever since, articulated in terms of a confrontational relation between the human subject and the monotheistic deity. He questioned the master/slave relationship between the human and the deity in monotheism as antithetical to any notion of justice and equality and considered the concepts of hell and heaven as a reflection of oppression and wrath and therefore not befitting human nature (Akhundzadeh 1985,183). He also accused the creator of never acknowledging the power of our understanding since we are his slaves" (Akhundzadeh 1985, 88). The celestial and the terrestrial authoritarianism of despots, according to Akhundzadeh, has resulted in an abject and sycophantic attitude among the people of the East towards authority (Akhundzadeh 1985, 52-3).

Akhundzadeh's then turned his critique back to humans by depicting the idea of monotheistic God as a projection of our own passions and abominations, desires and quest for status and prestige and our own vengefulness (Akhundzadeh 1985, 108). For these reasons, he advocated human reason over revelation and thus, in his

estimation, reversed the process by which the guardians of religion have retarded and "imprisoned" reason for a few thousand years (Akhundzadeh 1985, 94). What Akhundzadeh proposed as the content of this human reason, was nothing but a positivist view of modern science . Reflecting this positivist attitude he lamented that our God, instead of informing us .of America, the steam and electrical power, tells us about Bilqis, the City of Sheba and the story of Solomon and the Hoopoe(*Hudhud*) (Akhundzadeh 1985, 88). This lamentation is just an excuse for a call for a transition from a world view based on religious metaphysical beliefs to one based on natural sciences. Addressing an imaginary prince called Jalal Al-Duleh, who receives his correspondence, Akhundzadeh wrote,

As long as you an your co-religionists are not informed of the science of nature and astronomy, and as long as your knowledge of supernatural events and miracles among you is not [based on] scientific principles, you and them will always believe in supernatural events, miracles, magic, talisman, fairies, jinnis, saints, peris and such delusions and will remain ignorant forever (Akhundzadeh 1985, 94).

What is of most importance is that Akhundzadeh suggested that natural sciences should become the guide and criteria for questions pertaining to the practice/ethical sphere. He argued that there are three spheres in every religion. They consist of beliefs, devotions and the practical/ethical sphere and the latter is the main purpose of all religions and the first two are secondary (Akhundzadeh 1985, 220-221). So far we have needed the first two spheres to attain the practical/ethical sphere, but if we find a means to achieve our

practical goals without subservience and enslavement, then we do not need the beliefs and devotions (Akhundzadeh 1985, 222). Needless to say, this means is provided by the modern European sciences which have obviated the need for the devotional and beliefs spheres (Akhundzadeh 1985, 222). In this way, Akhundzadeh delivered the practical/ethical sphere which he just liberated from religion, back to the clutches of another type of determinism, science.

In order to illustrate his ideas, Akhundzadeh utilized a short period of Ismaili history as a point of reference.¹⁸ He narrated the account of Hasan Ibn Mohammad known as Ala Zekrat al-Salam, who as the leader of the Ismaili heterodox sect in late 12th century declared the Sharia (Divine Law) annulled, decreed the unveiling of women and banned polygamy (Akhundzadeh 1985, 134-7). All these measures, taken by Hasan Ibn Mohammad, constituted for Akhundzadeh the essential foundation of what he called "Islamic Protestantism" by which he meant a religion in which, "Gods' rights [*Huququ'llah*] and worshiper's duties [*Takalif Ibadullah*] are annulled and only human rights remain" (Akhundzadeh 1985, 32).

What lies at the core of Akhundzadeh's thought, it seems, is his ontological views pertaining to pantheism or rather panentheism.¹⁹ First he rejected the notion of a transcendental creator and the creation fixed in a master/slave relationship: "the universe is but one complete force, one complete being". Then he continued with a *panentheistic* notion which considers all parts of the being, whether

¹⁸ Ismailis were a sect within the "extreme" Shiites founded in late 8th century. They were famous for their heterodox views and practices. See, for example, Daftari 1995, 1992 and Lewis 1985.

¹⁹ For the difference between pantheism and panentheism, see Chapter 1.

the emanating or the emanated, the particular and universal, as being equal: "the 'origin' and the 'end' are the same; neither the 'origin' or the 'end' have priority over one another" (Akhundzadeh 1985, 95-96). Therefore ,all "particles" of this unified "being" are equal and none has any authority over the other and no miracles willed by any of these particles can be performed. This is so because, Akhundzadeh argued, what governs the relations between these particles of being is an eternal and omnipotent law which determines all the events in this world (Akhundzadeh 1985, 96-7). Thus, he denied the possibility of free will since even emanation is not by free will because any notion of free will would negate the possibility of equality between the universal being and the particular,

In reality the universal and the particle is but one being which is manifested 'without willing' [*bela ekhtiyar*] in infinite multiplicity and in different forms only in accordance to the said *principle* and under *its own laws and conditions* (Akhundzadeh 1985, 102-3 ; emphasis added).

Then in a footnote he further explained that necessity (*jabr*) is the lack of will on the part of the universal (*vojud kol*) in its emanation and if someone interprets necessity in any other way s/he has not understood (Akhundzadeh 1985, 103).

As we saw in Chapter One, Hegel used the concept of panentheism to arrive at subjectivity and freedom. Here Akhundzadeh utilizes the same idea only to arrive at the necessity and determinism of the laws and principles of which the scientific laws constituted the

concrete form. Therefore, it is no accident that Akhundzadeh in the same section that he discussed these rather abstract issues, alluded to the physical laws governing the events in the universe. For example he considered the sun and the moon as "particles" of the universe which as such are subject to the *eternal law* which determines the state of all other "particles" (Akhundzadeh 1985, 97).

As I have tried to show in this section this duality in the ontological core of Akhundzadeh's discourse found its way in very concrete forms in different aspects of his discourses. This duality reflects the same duality which I discussed in the beginning of this chapter and manifests the same tension between the two categories which I have termed positivist subjectivity which ultimately negates subjectivity on the one hand, and the potentiality of universalizable subjectivity on the other. Perhaps the most sinister manifestation of Akhundzadeh's positivism was what may be called "enlightenment from above". As Maryam Sanjabi has argued this approach to modernity ended up calling for an Enlightened Despot such as a Peter the Great or Frederick II to put the house of Iran in order and bring modernity to her. As Iranian history later clearly reveals, this role was fulfilled by the Pahlavi monarchs but at the expense of the disappearance of the emancipatory modernity. Perhaps the most ironic aspect of the unintended consequence of Akhundzadeh's discourse was that in attempting to create a notion of human subjectivity through his radical views on Islam, he alienated his potential audiences, the majority of whom had strong attachments to religion. He seems to have been aware of such a consequence, but rejected the pleas for toning down his rhetoric because, as he put it,

his work would be as ineffective as those of Rumi, Shabestari, Jami and other Sufi thinkers before him (Akhundzadeh 1978,184). In a similar vein, Akhundzadeh's views on Iranian nationalism portended the eclipses of freedom and democracy since they were not primarily based on a notion of citizenship rights, as they defined Iranian nationality in contradistinction to the alterity of Arabs.

Thus, again in the case of Akhundzadeh, we come across a mixture of potentially emancipatory ideas and at the same time their very negation side by side. This duality is expressed in his call for a constitution, a liberal universal education, emancipation of women as well his practical/ethical positivism, racist nationalism and the idea of enlightenment from above by a Great Man.

Talebuf: A Discourse of Conflict and Reconciliation

Compared to his colleagues and their themes on modernity so far discussed in this chapter, in Talebuf's discourse the themes bearing on universalizable subjectivity are more developed, although, as we will see, he also exhibits strong strains of positivism now and then. This tendency in Talebuf is also accompanied by a tendency to acknowledge and attempt to reconcile the contradictions emerging in the process of Iran's early encounter with modernity. Writing in late 19th and early 20th centuries, compared to his earlier colleagues, he was perhaps more exposed to these contradictions and therefore more aware of the complexities of the process of the encounter with modernity.

Abulrahim Talebuf (1832-1910) was born into a middle class family of artisans in Tabriz. His father and grandfather were both

carpenters (Adamiyat 1984, 1). This background and his later successful business enterprise in the Caucasus may also be related to his more complicated and less dogmatic views on modernity in Iran. At age sixteen he left Iran for Tbilisi and studied in modern schools of the Caucasus and later settled in Tamar Khan Shureh in Daghestan. A total of eleven books are attributed to him (Afshar 1978, 19-20). Apparently he wrote all of them after age 55 (Adamiyat 1984, 3). Talebuf's writing had a direct impact on the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909) and he was elected to the first parliament (Majlis) convened in 1906 as a deputy from his birthplace of Tabriz but for reasons that are not entirely clear he did not attend the parliament.

One of the central concepts in Talebuf's discourse also revolves around the notion of critique. He began his famous 3 volume work, *The Book of Ahmad* with the statement that our humanity started the day we started to question and seek the nature of things (Talebuf, 1893, 2).²⁰ He also attributed the very possibility of progress in a nation to the practice of *kritikeh* [critique], "in the practical-discursive sphere of natural interests" (Talebuf 1978, 100). It is not difficult to see that Talebuf's notion of critique is closely related to his concept of freedom as an essential category in human affairs. He considered freedom as an end in itself,

Azadi [freedom] unlike our other discourses or practices, is not a "means" to produce an end, as for example walking is

²⁰ Book of Ahmad (*Ketab Ahmad ya Safineh Talebi*) was published at first in two volumes in 1893 and 1894 in Istanbul. Both volumes contain discussions in a commonly understood language on science and technology known to him. In the style of the book he was very much influenced by Rousseau's *Emile*. He later added a 3rd volume with the subtitle The Questions of Life (*Masaal al-Hyat*) in 1906 where he paid more attention to practical philosophical issues.

to travel, as reading is to learning , as eating is to gain bodily strength...Therefore we realize that everything we see is a means to an end except freedom [which exists] only for freedom...hence we call it an abstract term (Talebuf 1906,95-6).

But this "abstraction" in Talebuf's discourse finds a concrete determination as right. "Right is born with the human", he wrote in his *Masel al-Hayat*, "since the day of birth to the day of death" (Talebuf 1906, 73). At this point Talebuf was faced with the question of grounding his concept of right. For this purpose he suggested a term in Persian which seems to be very close to the concept of subjectivity.²¹ He advanced the Persian term "*mani*" to convey such a meaning. This term derives from the Persian term "*man*" meaning "I" and *mani* is the adjective form. *Mani* may be translated as "Ipseism" or "Egoism" which have similar connotations. Traditionally *mani* or its Arabic equivalent *ananiyat* have had a similar negative connotation as the term egoism does in English. But, here we see Talebuf use the concept of *mani* in a positive sense,

In order to produce Right, we have one source and one origin...which is constituted of my *mani* , your *mani* and his /her *mani*. The origin [lies] in our language by means of which we express the right (Talebuf 1906, 74).

²¹He also grounded his conceptualization of freedom in terms of a natural right in his essay *Izahat Dar Khususe Azadi* (Explanations Regarding Freedom): "whether in Arabic *Huriyat*, in Persian *Azadi*, or in Turkish *Uzdenlek*, it may be defined as natural freedom [by] which all men by nature and birth are free in all acts and words and except for their commander, that is their will, there are no impediments in their deeds and words. God has not created any force external to man to impede him; and no one may dispose of our freedom, let alone give it or take it away from us" (Afshar 1978, 88).

Talebuf's discussion of right and freedom was not confined to the individual level as he extrapolated from the individual to the universal of collectively. The cornerstone of his extrapolation lies in what he called the "collision" of the right of the Self with the right of the Other (Talebuf 1906, 73-74). Without such a collision of rights, he argued, and hence creation of universal rights, mutual happiness is not possible (Talebuf 1906, 74-5). After right is transmitted from particular to universal, it creates a *mani* for the collectively. This view of the individual and collective subjectivity led Talebuf to define the concept of law (*Qanun*), which as we saw earlier was defined often in as a mere codification of despot rule or bureaucratization of despotism, in terms of the rights of the individual as well as the collectivity.

Qanun means the systematic articulation of specific principles of civil and political rights and restrictions pertaining to the individual and the collectivity, through which every person would be secure in property and life and equitably responsible for wrong acts (Talebuf 1968, 94).

It is crucial to note that Talebuf made a distinction between a conception of law (*Qanun*) as organized (*montazam*) despotism and one derived from popular sovereignty, as he mentioned the Tzarist Russia as the examples of the former (Adamiyat 1984, 39).

In a similar way, Talebuf's approach regarding the question of nation and nationalism was enlightened and conducive to universal emancipation as it was not marred by chauvinism. He defined freedom as a, "common spiritual capital...which the individual

Iranians have gradually accumulated and deposited in a vault called the nation" (Afshar 1978, 89), Talebuf extended his extrapolation to include not only intra-national relations but also the international rights. The same *mani* selfhood which exists in an intra-national collectivity should also apply to the inter-national community (Talebuf 1906, 75-6). For this purpose, he suggested the creation of a league of nations to resolve the disputes of international conflicts (Talebuf 1893, 144). Later in The Questions of Life, Talebuf expressed hopes for the creation of a socialistic federation of nations where all the inhabitants of the earth would be treated as the members of a family (Talebuf 1906, 91).

Talebuf's theorizing on the concept of freedom was not confined to mere abstractions. He divided freedom into three principle spheres of life, opinion and speech. From these he also derived secondary freedoms such as freedom of election, freedom of press and freedom of assembly which in turn lead to some tertiary freedoms (Talebuf 1906, 97). Interestingly, he used the metaphor of monetary assets to describe the "possession" of opinions, according to which every person has a legitimate right to protect and should not be forced to an unequal "exchange" or to give them away (Talebuf 1906, 97-8).

As I mentioned earlier, Talebuf acknowledged and discussed some of the conflicts engendered by the process of modernity and its impact on a country like Iran. The conflict between the individual and collectivity constituted for him a typical case in point. When the individual's right "collides" with that of society, even though the individuals' right is essential and immune from annulments, it could be suspended. "Alternatively", he wrote, "from the combination of

two rights a third right may be created "(Talebuf 1906, 79). He gave the example of eminent domain as a legitimate case when the right of the individual may be suspended when in conflict with that of the collectivity (Talebuf 1906, 77). However, Talebuf did attempt to preserve both the right of the individual and collectivity simultaneously by differentiating not the principles of the two rights but their extents: "Individual rights and collective or national rights are divided into two; symmetrical in principle but different in the extent" (Talebuf 1906, 80). He then proposed a legal system based on popular sovereignty and majority vote to make a balance between these two rights (Talebuf 1906, 84).

Another area of conflict which Talebuf attempted to reconcile was the conflict between the notion of popular sovereignty and its corollary positive law on the one hand, and the divine law on the other. He never explicitly addressed the issue in terms of a conflict between the two spheres. Nevertheless, his new and extensive use of interpretation of religious beliefs is indicative of an implicit acknowledgment of conflict between the two spheres and hence the attempt at reconciliation. While he thought of the law as deriving from popular sovereignty, he wrote of the Sharia (Divine Law) as the "foundation" of the law in Iran and described the law as the consummation and enforcement of the Divine Law (Talebuf 1906, 84). Earlier in his second volume of *The Book of Ahmad*, he had explicitly stated that "if we enact laws for ourselves, its basis would be the pure Sharia and the sacred explicit text [*nusus*] of the Quran" (Talebuf 19894, 11). What makes such a reconciliation in his discussion possible is the equation of people's will with the will of

God. "Hence, the law", he wrote in his Questions of Life, "which is enacted for the reform of public character by the votes of the majority, will have the effect of celestial words, since the voice of the people is the voice of God" (Talebuf 1906, 137).

At the core of the conflictual theories of Talebuf lies a conflictual ontological view which represents the conflict between orthodox monotheism and heterodox pantheism. In his book, *Masalik al-Muhsinin* which is an imaginary travelogue, Talebuf presented a narrative of genesis in which the universe is accounted for in terms of creation and emanation simultaneously. Using the first person pronoun as the voice of the creator, he stated, "in the center of my eternal and Protected Divinity, [I] created a nebulous moving light, which because of extreme heat under my command, at times separated a part of itself and projected it into space, the same part then became mobile also and assumed a spherical shape until the space was filled with moving spheres...From the movement of the spirit of spirits [I] created light and heat and assigned them to educate the beings...[I] assigned the earth, one of the small planets of the visible sun, as the habitat of man..." (Talebuf 1968, 131-2). A few pages later, however, he spoke of the universe and beings in terms of pantheistic emanations, in contrast to the "creationist" tone of the above passage,

particles of beings testify to the Unity of God [vahdat allah], since beings are constituted of particles and every particle according to its capacity is both the one and carrier of unity (Talebuf 1968, 130).

As we saw before, those theorists whose ontological views were grounded in a pantheistic metaphysics tended to arrive at a theory of human subjectivity and its universalizability. Here, by presenting both a pantheistic and monotheistic ontology, Talebuf seems to be attempting to bridge the gap between the two approaches which ultimately manifests itself in the conflict between positive law grounded in popular sovereignty and the Divine Law. But, here he is faced with the problem of where to place human subjectivity vis-a-vis the Divine subjectivity. In order to solve this problem, Talebuf invoked an igneous theme from the Quran according to which the human is given the mantle of God's vicegerency on earth as a limited subject (Talebuf 1968, 144-5).²²

Talebuf discussed this conflict between the positive law and Divine law in a very concrete fashion in a section of *Masalik al-Muhsinin*. In an imaginary debate with an orthodox mullah, the mullah raises the questions of redundancy of positive law, given the elaborate injunctions of the Divine Law (Talebuf 1968, 94). Talebuf retorts that, "these injunctions were the very best and the most proper of all laws of civilizations and religions of the world a thousand years ago. But they have no [application] to a hundred years ago, let alone to our age". Then he recommends to "leave undistributed those injunctions of the Quran which were enacted for a specific time and are inapplicable now and instead enact new and applicable laws" (Talebuf 1968, 95). Again, he grounded his attempt at reconciliation in terms of a philosophical view parallel to his

²²As we will see in chapter five, ever since Talebuf, this view of the human as God's viceroy has been utilized by religious theorists facing the same dilemma. See the Quran Al Baqarah 30 and also Al Asra 70.

dichotomy between emanation and "creationism" which viewed all the universe as "incidental" (*hadeth*) and therefore subject to change except the Necessary Being, and its word the Quran, which is exempt from any change. From this he arrived at the incongruent conclusion that those injunctions of the Quran belonging to the "incidental" sphere are subject to change while the Quran itself is not subject to change.

Talebuf was one of the first theorists who became aware of the potential conflict between modernity and national identity. He chastised the "westernized" (*mofarang*) Iranians who apishly imitate Western dress and languages (Talebuf 1894,22-3). In a famous passage he admonished the Iranians to preserve their Iranian identity and not to be deceived by the glitter of the West. The purpose of learning, according to him, was,

to become familiar with the management of the [affairs of] the country; to realize the [meaning of] love for the country; to worship the king; to respect your tradition and not accept anything from any country except science, industry and beneficial information; do not imitate; be always and everywhere an Iranian and realize that the East is different from the West-- the sun rises in one and sets in the other. This simple reason is enough to distinguish us from them (Talebuf 1968, 194).

Talebuf seems to have been also quite conscious about the discontents of modernity. He warned about the false utopia promised by the concept of "*civilization*" (he used the French transliteration) which after one became familiar with its agents, one could smell its "diabolic miasma" and see through its monstrous lack

of consciousness and empathy. He also saw the manifestation of selfishness in mass poverty, homelessness and prostitution found in European cities of his time (Talebuf 1958, 93). Yet, despite these criticisms, Talebuf was aware that he could not reject modernity. In his third volume of The Book of Ahmad or The Questions of Life he set up a debate between his fictitious son Ahmad, who has now grown up well versed in modern sciences and philosophy, and another certain fictitious character named Agha Abdullah. Agha Abdullah argues against the process of modernity in Iran, based on the observation that all the development of West is to conquer the markers and territories of other parts of the world through military might, resulting in tremendous carnage, bloodshed and colonial conquest and rivalry unprecedented in human history (Talebuf 1906, 50-55). To these objections, Ahmad retorts by saying that the struggle among humans is "natural", since the substance we are made of is comprised of two elements of protecting self-interests and rejecting the other's interests (Talebuf 1906, 56-57). Near the end of the debate Ahmad concludes that "preservation of the self" and "the right of existence" is naturally given, and to make his point he mentions the struggle between Able and Cain. Then Ahmad tries to explain the wars of the 19th century as an outcome of this process of preservation of self-interests which would eventually result in the creation of nations with a sense of rights in the international arena (Talebuf 1906, 64-68). Thus by analyzing the struggle for domination inherent in subjectivity, Talebuf arrives at the creation of rights, which he then extrapolates to nations and the gradual emergence of international rights.

Talebuf's considerable theoretical sophistication regarding the concept of rights led him to become conscious of the limited nature of citizenship if confined merely to the legal and political spheres. For this reason he advanced the idea of impossibility of the creation of a citizenry without the distribution of land among the peasants, for the first time, it seems, in modern Iranian history. This recognition was significant because it represents the beginning of the felt need for the expansion and deepening of the concept of universalizable subjectivity as citizenship.

What enriched Talebuf's approach was the dialectical nature of his discourse manifested in some paradoxes with which he seems to have been happy to live. These paradoxes are manifested in his strong belief in modern sciences and his simultaneously not dismissing the possibility of the "violation" of principles of physics by an Indian yogi.²³ In a similar vein, he considered freedom and necessity, human volition and destiny (*taqdir*) to belong to the same mixed bag of life (Talebuf 1968, 65;150).

All in all, compared to other theorists examined in this chapter, Talebuf's discourse seems to be the most intricate and conducive to universalizable subjectivity. Yet, even his discourse is not completely free from elements of positivist subjectivity. Even though his main view of law was that of positive law grounded in popular sovereignty, at times he expressed views of law very much in tune with a positivistic approach to law which considered the law as mere codification of arbitrary rules (Talebuf 1894, 80-81). He

²³See his *Masalik al-Muhsinin* pp. 220-221 for his advocating of science and pp. 228-229 for his admiration for the Indian yogi.

was, at times, also a strong proponent of "enlightenment from above", as he elaborated on the Japanese model of "modernity" to be implemented in Iran.²⁴ Thus we can observe the duality discussed at the beginning of this chapter, although to a lesser degree, also reproduced in Talebuf's discourse.

Talebuf's discourse was particularly important because it raised the question of subjectivity and the struggle against imperialism as the Eastern nations developed a consciousness of their subjugated status and the need for them to attempt to close ranks to fight against domination and gain their rights(Talebuf 1906, 89-90). But, as I will discuss in the next section, this important theme was most elaborately developed by Jamal al-Din Afghani as the champion of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani: Anti-imperialism and Subjectivity

Sayyid Jamal al-Din Asadababli, known as Afghani, was a major political thinker and activist whose personal legend and discourse have had a lasting influence on the nativist anti-imperialist struggle, not only in Iran, but more importantly across all Islamic countries and communities. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, a large part of the discourse on, and praxis of, modern subjectivity in Iran was a reaction to Western imperialism. This reactive subjectivity was in turn strongly represented by the discourse on positivist

²⁴It is noteworthy, that among all the written constitutions available, Talebuf chose to translate and append to the end of his book the Japanese constitution, according to which the Emperor was assigned the role of the enlightened despot in the late 19th century. See Talebuf 1906, 137-151.

sciences, militarism, rationalized order, bureaucracy and chauvinist nationalism. All these moments of reactive subjectivity to imperialism derived their origins in the West itself. Afghani's discourse sought these as well as critical and emancipatory dimensions of subjectivity, but were recast into an Islamic mold, as the most effective means of fighting imperialism. As I will presently examine, in the course of such a remolding, Afghani's discourse had to succumb to a series of contradictions with crucial consequences for the emancipatory dimension of subjectivity.

Sayyid Jamal al-Din was born in 1838. His place of birth has been a subject of disagreement, partly because he himself, apparently for political reasons, wanted to be considered a Sunni Afghan and hence was known as Afghani. But, there seems to be good evidence that he was born in the village of Asadabad near the city of Hamedan in western Iran (Keddie 1972, 10-11). His father was a cultivator but seems to have been a learned man who taught his son at home. At about age ten his father took Sayyid Jamal al-Din to the town of Qazvin and then to Tehran to study. Later he studied in the Shi'i cities of Iraq but not under Murtaza Ansari, the leading Shi'i Mojtaheh in Iraq as Afghani later claimed (Keddie 1972 14-17). It was during this period that he received a good training in traditional Islamic sciences as well as considerable familiarity with Islamic philosophy and sufism, two subjects considered by many to be on the verge of heresy. During the same period, he seems to have attracted the hostility of some of the ulema partly perhaps because of his unorthodox views and behaviors such as eating during the fasting month of Ramadam (Keddie 1972, 16-17). At about the age eighteen

Afghani took a journey to India, the duration of which is uncertain, but seems to have been long enough to have developed his profound anti-imperialist sentiments as a result of first hand observation of British colonialism in that country (Keddie 1968, 11-12). It was during his first stay in India that he became familiar with Western thought and modern sciences and, according to one contemporary account underwent a thorough conversion to atheism which he held privately for most the rest of his life (Keddie 1968, 12-13).

After a trip to Mecca in the mid 1860s he went to Afghanistan to be employed by the Amir of Afghanistan as an advisor, a charge which he achieved by counseling the Amir to ally himself with the Russians to fight against the British interests. Soon after the defeat of the Amir by his half-brother, Afghani was expelled from that country and landed in Istanbul (Keddie 1968, 15-16). In the Ottoman capital, where he came in contact with the mostly secularist intellectuals of the Tanzimat period, he was appointed to the council of education in 1870 (Keddie 1968, 16). Later in that year, as a result of a public lecture for which he was accused of heresy, he was expelled from Istanbul to Cairo. He stayed in Cairo until 1879 when he was once more expelled. It is during this period that he attempted to create an anti-imperialist ideology which could appeal to the Muslim elite and masses both. After his expulsion from Cairo on the grounds of the "heretical" lecture, he became more cautious in addressing the faithful directly in non-orthodox terms (Keddie 1962, 19). But, for his elite audience he reintroduced classical Islamic philosophy, which had been abandoned in the Sunni world for being heretical. He revived this philosophy with deep nativist roots, as a

basis for renewed attention to scientific and political/practical spheres without borrowing from the imperialist West.

After his expulsion from Egypt, he went to the Muslim-ruled principality of Heydarabad in India where he befriended some of the followers of Sir Ahmad Khan who advocated a European style modernization for India and Muslims. However, soon Afghani turned against Ahmad Khan and wrote a treatise refuting the principles of his teachings. In 1882, Afghani left Heydarabad for London and from there went to Paris where he cooperated with Arabs intellectuals in their pan-Islamic and anti-British efforts, by writing articles for Arabic journals. During this period, he criticized Renan for essentializing the backwardness of Muslim people, but at the same time, Afghani expressed his own anti-orthodox and critical views against religion in general and orthodox Islam in particular. After two years of unsuccessful attempts and schemes to try to negotiate with the British over the settlement of the question of Egypt and the uprising of Mahdi in Sudan, Afghani went to Tehran 1885. Naser Al-Din Shah was soon alarmed by Afghani's anti-British ideas and asked him to leave Iran 1887. After two years in Moscow, Afghani returned to Iran where his instigations against the government and the British resulted in his forceful and degrading expulsion which ended in exile in London where joined Mirza Malkum Khan in his campaign against Naser Al-Din Shah's autocratic rule (Keddie 1968, 28-29). From London, at the invitation of Sultan Abulhamid II, Afghani went to Istanbul again in 1892. There the Sultan had Afghani involved in a propaganda campaign appealing to the Shii *ulema* in support of Sultan's pan-Islamic aspirations.

However, after a few years the relations between the Sultan and Afghani turned sour and Afghani came under Sultan's suspicion and was prevented by him from leaving the Ottoman territory. In the last years of his life Afghani was stripped of his political power and influence by the Sultan and he died of jaw cancer in 1897.

As Niki Keddie has observed, underlying Afghani's discourse there is a strong assumption that the modern world necessitates a view of human agency expressed in, "activism, the freer use of human reason and political and military strength" (Keddie 1968, 3). It is interesting that in Afghani's case the critical component in his approach to modernity was weightier than the positivist component which makes sense in the view of his commitment to the unorthodox "Islamic" philosophy. "If someone looks deeply into the question," he averred, "he will see that science rules the world. There was, is and will be no rule in the world but science" (Afghani 1968a, 102). But a few pages later he qualified his statement by saying that,

A science is needed to be the comprehensive soul for all the sciences, so that it can preserve their existence, apply each of them in its proper place, and become the cause of progress of each one of those sciences. The science that has the position of a comprehensive soul and the rank of a preserving force is the science of *falsafa* or philosophy, because its subject is universal. It is philosophy that shows man human prerequisites. It shows the sciences what is necessary. It employs each of the sciences in its proper place. If a community did not have philosophy, and all the individuals of that community were learned in the sciences with particular subjects, those sciences could not last in that community for a century...that community without the spirit of philosophy could not deduce conclusions from these sciences. The Ottoman government and the Khedive of Egypt have opened up schools for the teaching of the new sciences for a period of sixty years and until now they have

not received any benefits from those sciences (Afghani 1968a, 104).

What is of crucial importance is that Afghani grounded his conceptualization of philosophy in the idea of reasoning and critical argumentation as he argued that "the father and mother of knowledge [*elm*] is reasoning [*börhan*] and reasoning is neither Aristotle nor Galileo. The truth is where there is reasoning..." (Afghani 1968, 107; translation slightly modified). In another essay entitled *Fawa'id Falsafa* (The Benefits of Philosophy]) Afghani took his argument one step further by contending that philosophy was even prior to revelation and the latter is but a preparatory stage for the achievement of philosophy. In other words, Afghani argued that revelation was a base which would lead the way to a subjectivist epistemology based on philosophy. He first argued in favor of the centrality of critical faculties in humans,

philosophy is the escape from the narrowness of animal sense impression into the wide area of human perception. It is the removal of darkness of bestial illusions with the light of natural intelligence; the transformation of blindness and lack of insight into clear-sightedness and insight (Afghani 1968b, 110).

Then he discussed the role of Islam and the Quran in preparing the pre-Islamic "savage" Arabs to embrace the philosophical traditions developed by more civilized nations,

In sum, in that Precious Book [The Quran] with solid verse, He planted the roots of philosophical sciences into purified souls, and opened the road for man to become man.

When the Arab people came to believe in that Precious Book they were transferred from the sphere of ignorance to knowledge, from blindness to vision, from savagery to civilization, and from nomadism to settlement. They understood their needs for intellectual and spiritual accomplishment and for gaining a living (Afghani 1968b, 114; emphasis added).

These ideas later developed, Afghani argued, and Arabs realized that they could not develop further without the help of other nations: "Therefore, notwithstanding the glory, splendor, and greatness of Islam and Muslims, in order to exact and elevate knowledge, they [Arabs] lowered their heads and showed humility before the lowest of their subjects, who were Christians, Jews and Magians [Persians] until with their help, they translated the philosophical sciences from Persian, Syriac and Greek into Arabic. Hence it became clear that their Precious Book was the first teacher of philosophy to the Muslims" (Afghani 1968b, 114).

In the same essay, Afghani presented a view of human action which may seem very much to correspond to a Faustian view of subjectivity. He recognized the necessity of satisfaction of human material needs such as agriculture and animal husbandry, procurement of water, construction of shelter, preservation of health achieved through sciences and technology (Afghani 1968b, 110; Afghani 1958, 118). Yet, he considered critical philosophy to be the foundation of these sciences and technologies as he wrote, "It [philosophy] is the foremost cause of the production of knowledge, the creation of sciences, the invention of industries and the initiation of crafts" (Afghani 1968b, 110; Afghani 1958, 118). Furthermore,

Afghani argued that the satisfaction of material needs is just a prerequisite towards enabling us to pay attention to our souls (Afghani 1968b,111; Afghani 1958,119). Afghani's most explicit statement of his critical thinking was articulated in an article published on May 18, 1883 in *Journal des Debats* in response to Ernest Renan's uncritical attack on Islam as being inherently against modern civilization. In this article, Afghani demonstrated the baselessness of Renan's racist attitudes toward Arabs and yet praised the superiority of critical thought, i.e. scientific and philosophical thought over revelation (Afghani 1968c, 81-87).²⁵

The aspects of Afghani's discourse I discussed above constitute the part of his writings that targeted what he perceived to be the enlightened Muslim elite as his audience and they were written in a highly abstruse and philosophical language. As I mentioned before, he also developed a parallel discourse which appealed more to the "masses" motivated by his anti-imperialist goals, and which was in sharp contrast to his first critical discourse.

Afghani's "second discourse" is most sharply expressed in a famous essay entitled "The Truth about the Neicheri Sect and Explanation of the Neicheris," written in 1881, even before he wrote the essays belonging to his critical discourse discussed above. In this essay, Afghani depicted a picture of an anti-imperialist collective subject, possessing political and military power incarnated in an Islamic nation which could stand up to Western hegemony.²⁶ He

²⁵ Interestingly enough this essay has never been translated into Persian, thus veiling the heterodox and anti-religious thoughts of Afghani from his Muslim audiences.

²⁶ Neicheris were the followers of Sir Ahmad Khan (1817-1897) and the term "Neicheri" was derived from the English word nature, which Afghani used as a

identified the concept of "social solidarity" as the linchpin of this collective subject, which the West through its "agents" such as Sir Ahmad Khan was trying to subvert. Apparently drawing on Ibn Khaldun's parallel concept of *asabiyah*, Afghani's concept of social solidarity explained the longevity of civilizations and nations in terms of sets of beliefs which bonded the members of a society together and protected that society from external invasion and internal disintegration.

The *Neicheris* or "materialists", as Afghani in his "second discourse" lumped together the unorthodox and critical thinkers, the socialists, communists and nihilists, were in his view bent on destroying the social solidarity of nations, Islamic or otherwise, throughout history (Afghani 1968d, 140). What made social solidarity possible, in his analysis, was religious faith and specifically faith in a Transcendental Deity who would in the next world mete out reward and punishment as recompense to individual believers' deeds while living on earth (Afghani 1968d, 167). Afghani elaborated about components of religious faith which undergird the social order and social solidarity in society. These which he termed as "Religion's Three Beliefs," consisted of: 1) the belief that "there is a terrestrial angel [human], and that he is the noblest of creatures," 2) the certainty that one's community "is the noblest one, and that all outside...[one's] community are in error and deviation," and 3) the belief that, " man has come into the world in order to acquire accomplishments worthy of transferring him to a world more

generic term representing unorthodox views and atheism. See Keddie 1968 for more details.

excellent, higher, vaster, and more perfect than this narrow and dark world" (Afghani 1968d,141). As to the first and second components of the religious faith necessary for social solidarity and social order, Afghani reasoned that they were necessary for a sense of collective subjectivity vis-a-vis nature and other social collectivities (Afghani 1968d,142). It was the third belief, however, which was, as Afghani put it,

the best impulse towards civilization, whose foundations are true knowledge and refined morals. It is the best requisite for the *stability of the social order*, which is founded on each individual's knowledge of his proper rights, and his following the straight path of justice...It is the best basis for the peace and calm of the classes of humanity, because peace is the fruit of love and justice and love and justice result from admirable qualities and habits. It is the only belief that restrains man from all evils, saves him from vales of adversity and misfortune, and seats him in the virtuous city on the throne of happiness" (Afghani 1968d, 144).

In contrast to this collectivist notion of agency, Afghani argued, the most effective means by which the Neicheris and unorthodox attempted to undermine social solidarity was by the introduction of individual subjectivity rendered by Afghani as "egoism" which denies the beliefs in reward and punishment in the afterlife,

And since, because of these corrupt opinions, each of them [people corrupted by disbelief] believed that there is no life but this one, the quality of *egoism* [in French translation] overcame them. The quality of *egoism* consists of self-love to the point that if a personal profit requires a man having that quality to let the whole world be harmed, he would not renounce that profit but would consent to the harm of everyone in the world (Afghani 1968d, 151).

However, to draw the conclusion that Afghani's discourse was against human subjectivity as such is inaccurate. What he and, as we will see in following chapters, some other religious theorists in the second half of the twentieth century who have utilized religion in their socio-political analyses, have conceptualized about human subjectivity can be best described as "mediated subjectivity". By "mediated subjectivity" I refer to the notion of human subjectivity circuitously projected onto the attributes of the monotheistic deity, such as omnipotence and omniscience. In the Islamic discourse this concept is usually expressed in the notion of the human as the vicegerent of God which in Arabic is rendered as *Khalifato'llah*. Although Afghani did not explicitly discuss the concept of *Khalifato'llah* in his discourse, the ontological underpinning of it is nevertheless very much informed by this concept.²⁷

The subjectivity that is attributed to God and that which is attributed to the human converge in Afghani's thought in an article entitled, *Qaza va Qadar* roughly meaning "Destiny and Providence". In that article Afghani contrasted the concept of providence to that of necessity (*jabr*) by stating that while providence sets the general principles of phenomena, human volition also has an important role in the determination of events (Afghani 1969, 144-47).

The belief in providence, Afghani stated, if not mistaken for the concept of necessity (*jabr*) would result in the "creation of courage and initiative, bravery and chivalry and encourage man to engage in

²⁷ For a more elaborate discussion of the concept of "mediated subjectivity" see chapter five.

daring acts which the faint hearted would fear" (Afghani 1969, 142-43). A person who thus believes in God's destiny as well as humans' free will and ability to fulfill that destiny, he argued, would "never fear death in the defense of the people's and nation's rights and superiority. Nor would such a person be intimidated by death in rising up to fulfill what God has assigned to him" (Afghani 1969,143). Afghani concluded that this belief in providence accompanied by the rejection of "necessity", caused the success of early Muslims and their domination and superiority over other nations, which has to be emulated by the Muslims again (Afghani 1969,144-47).

As Keddie has observed, Afghani, in the tradition of many Muslim classical philosophers, believed in the impossibility of freedom for the "masses," and this very condition, as articulated in his "second discourse", stands in sharp contrast to the promise of modernity as universal subjectivity. Yet, what the second discourse of Afghani accomplished was to point out the need for an indigenous form of subjectivity raised in native cultural soil to make the resistance to Western hegemony possible.

The Constitutional Movement and the Fundamental Law

On the practical level, the mixed duality between what I have designated as positivist subjectivity and universalizable subjectivity in Iran as appropriation of modernity is reflected in the reforms which were intermittently undertaken by the Qajar high state bureaucrats in the second half of the 19th century and then in the constitutional movement which culminated in the constitutional

revolution of 1906 and to some extent crystallized in the "Fundamental Law" or *Qanun Asasi* as the constitution was called.

After Amir Kabir was dismissed by Naser Al-Din Shah, as we saw before, the task of state and social reform from above was neglected for a while. But soon it was pursued again, even though less vigorously than in Amir Kabir's time, by the modernizing individuals in the top echelons of Qajar bureaucracy. Among these modernizers, the efforts of Mirza Hussein Khan Mushir al-Duleh known as Sepahsalar are of most significance as they reflect more emphasis on positivist aspects of modernity, even though his efforts to bring change to the practical/cultural and political spheres cannot be neglected. Sepahsalar (1825 -1880) was born into a middle class family. His father was employed by the state bureaucracy who sent his two sons Hussein Khan and Yahya Khan to France to study. Hussein Khan became Iran's ambassador to the Ottoman State when he was only 39 and stayed in that post for twelve years until 1869 when he returned to Iran to be appointed as head of the judicial office, the head of religious endowments and the ministry of war consecutively. Eventually he served as the Prime Minister from 1870 to 1872. After his resignation from premiership which was forced upon him by the ulema and corrupt courtesans who were adversely affected by his reforms, he served as governor of different provinces, war minister, foreign minister and advisor to the crown prince, until his death in 1880, under suspicious circumstances.

By the very fact that Sepahsalar's reforms were in the framework of Qajar state bureaucracy, they were more in the direction of positivist rationalization and less conducive to the emancipatory

aspects of modernity. By this I do not mean to dismiss the necessity of rationalization and economic development for a country like Iran. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate the precedent of privileging the process of rationalization and economic development over the socio-political development which, as we will see in next chapter, resulted in the eclipse of the latter and the reduction of the logic of modernity to rationalization and economic development early in the 20th century. Rationalization and economic development are an inevitable part of modernity but they should not subordinate and dominate the process of socio-political emancipation, rather they should be subordinate to it.

In any event, some of the first modern factories run by steam power established by Sepahsalar were armament and arsenal factories as well as a cast iron foundry imported from Europe in 1874 (Adamiyat 1977, 319) He also ordered the importation of electric and gas light factories from Europe in 1878 (Adamiyat 1977, 320). The idea of establishment of railroads in Iran was also seriously pursued by Sepahsalar and other reformers of his time. It is noteworthy that the idea of railroads which became a national obsession until it was realized during Reza Shah's rule, was enthusiastically accepted by the ulema who were not so keen on the other aspects of modernity at this time in Iran.²⁸ In a similar way,

²⁸ Sepahsalar, in order to promote his project for railroads solicited the opinion of Haji Mulla Sadeq, the grand orthodox jurisconsult of Qom. He enthusiastically expressed his support for such a project because of its great potential for economic development, the control of inflation in foodstuff prices and creation of jobs for the unemployed, which may "under God's providential grace" turn Iran "into a flower garden" and lift the distress, the dejection of the masses of people each of whom would engage in a vocation" (Adamiyat 1977, 328).

Sepahsalar's attempts at rationalization and organization (*tanzim*) of the state bureaucracy was warmly received by Naser al-Din Shah. The Shah responded to Sepahsalar's letter expressing the desire to see Iran's government "organized" like other rationalized states, with the following words,

I desire nothing but the organization [*nazm*] of the state [and] I consider you as its organizer. Your protection and the organization of the state is incumbent upon me to whatever degree that is necessary. Any person who obstructs and disturbs the organization, be he our own son, would be rejected (Adamiyat 1977, 210).

Symbolic of the rationalization of the bureaucracy which was achieved under Sepahsalar's reforms, was the institutionalization of appointment times in the state bureaucracy (*darbkhaneh*) for the first time in Iran. Prior to this reform most of the ministers ran state offices from their private residences. Sepahsalar changed this state of affairs and established business hours for the state bureaucracy (Adamiyat 1977, 450). Sepahsalar and his close associate Mirza Yusef Khan Mustashar al-Duleh were responsible for the establishment of the first court system in Iran. In addition to the administration of secular justice, this court system was also involved in the rudimentary creation of laws which seems to have been felt as threatening by the clerical establishment (Adamiyat 1977, 172-78).

The positivist streak in Sepahsalar's reforms was explicitly expressed in an article he wrote in one of the monthly newspapers entitled "Science and Ignorance" (*Elm va Jahl*). In this article, he attributed the conquering power of Western nations to their science and technology implying that a country such as Iran first and

foremost needed to rationalize its bureaucracy and develop its productive forces (Adamiyat 1977, 148). Yet, some of the reforms accomplished under Sepahsalar and during his time also included those more in line with emancipatory aspects of modernity. Among these, the flourishing of newspapers, as a relatively open forum for the exchange of ideas, contributed to the emergence of the preliminary stages of a public sphere in Iran.

The determination of Iran's intellectual encounter with modernity must be sought in the constitutional movement of the first decade of the 20th century which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909 and its crystallization as the Fundamental Law of 1906 as the constitution was called. But before we examine the constitutional movement and the Fundamental Law, it is necessary briefly to consider some of the political-social literature produced immediately before or at the time of the Constitutional Revolution. Essentially, this literature effected the same themes that constituted the thought of two previous generations as discussed above. However, some of the concepts were brought into a sharper focus and refined by the later theorists and propagandists of the constitutional movement.

One of the most refined concepts which emerged during this period was the idea of a citizen and a nomenclature to describe it. Before the advent of modernity the term used to describe the ordinary inhabitants of Iran was *ra'iyat* which in Arabic literally means flock of sheep. Sepahsalar was perhaps the first person to use the term *taba'e* instead which means a follower and which is still most prevalent in Iran. However, during the period immediately

before the Constitutional Revolution the Arabic term *madaniun*, which is a direct translation of the French term *citoyen* was introduced in Iran (Adamiyat 1976, 215). Similarly, Mirza Hussein Khan Mushir al-Mulk elaborated the definition of nationality in terms of the "concurrence of the ideas and aspirations of residents" (Adamiyat 1976, 208). Even the concept of human subjectivity was refined and explicitly expressed by a Perso-Arabic term, *fa'el mokhtar* by Mirza Mustafa Khan Mansural-Saltaneh in his book, Fundamental Rights or the Principles of Constitution. He wrote, "In the opinion of modern philosophers, only human kind, because of its concrete existence [is] a subject [*fa'el mokhtar*]...whereas the state does not have concrete existence" (Adamiyat 1976, 216).

One of the most influential books of this period was a book by Haji Zein al-Abedin Maraghei, a merchant, entitled The Travelogue of Ibrahim-Beg. This book, which is a fictitious travelogue, promoted the ideas of popular sovereignty as the basis of government. More importantly, his book also reflects the duality between positivist and emancipatory aspects of modernity. Thus, while Maraghei discussed the concept of the law in terms of the rights of citizens, he also referred to law in terms of rational codification, regulation, bureaucratic organization and order (Maraghei 1965, 81-83).

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was the result of the coalition between somewhat disparate social forces which because of convergence of their interests in fighting international imperialism and domestic despotism came together to overthrow the old regime and institute a new state of affairs by drawing on the intellectual heritage discussed so far in this chapter. The social forces that

converged to make the revolution consisted of the more or less secular intellectuals, the reformist state officials, the bazaar merchants and some of the clerics. Among these strata and classes the intellectuals or *munavar al-fekrs*, as they were called, were a relatively new social force which emerged in the process of Iran's intellectual response to modernity. The reformist characteristic of some of the state officials was also a response to the encounter with modernity even though the bureaucracy had existed in Iran for millennia. The merchants, however, owed their class consciousness and class solidarity to the relative development of Iran's infrastructure and the means of communications such as the introduction of telegraph, newspapers and a modernized postal system in the last quarter of the 19th century. The interests in revolutionary politics also stemmed from Iran's gradual economic integration into the imperialist world system which, while benefiting a small number of big merchants, encroached upon the traditional privileges of the majority of them (Abrahamian 1982, 58-60). The make up and motivation of the clerics for participation in the Constitutional movement, however, was more complex. Some of the most energetic and effective participants in the movement were quite unorthodox activist, who while wearing the clerical garb and using the pulpit as their forum, were secret Sheikhis, Babis or Azalis, all "heretical" tendencies from the point of view of the orthodox, *mutashari's*.²⁹ Other orthodox mullahs participated in the movement because they believed that the restriction of monarchical despotism

²⁹ See Bayat (1981) for a very important distinction among the clerical makeup and their participation in the constitutional movement.

would mean increase in their own power and prestige. These were soon disillusioned and after the first phase of the Revolution, when the new monarch, Mohammad Ali Shah, attempted to overthrow the Constitutional Parliament (the *majlis*), they switched to the side of the monarch. Yet, some of the more or less orthodox ulema, such as Tabatabai, remained loyal to the movement even though they were disaffected after a while.

The events and the role of personalities involved in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 all are very complex and beyond the scope of this chapter. I will suffice with a very brief outline.³⁰ The immediate cause of the revolutionary activities can be attributed to the drastic rise in food prices in 1905 as a result of a poor harvest, a cholera epidemic, the Russo-Japanese War and the subsequent revolution in Russia (Abrahamian 1982, 81). The subsequent inflation prompted the government to raise tariffs on Iranian merchants and withhold servicing of its debts to them. This economic crisis led to three consecutive and increasingly intense public protests which ended with the revolution of August 1906 (Abrahamian 1982, 81). During the second protest in December 1905, triggered by the government's bastinadoing of a highly respected and elderly Bazaar merchant for alleged hoarding, the protesters demanded, among other things, the enforcement of Sharia and the establishment of *edalat khaneh*, a "house of justice" (Abrahamian 1982, 82). During the course of the third protest, that lasted three weeks during the summer of 1906, a great number of

³⁰For elaborate histories of the Constitutional Revolution see Nazem al-Islam Kermani(1967), Dolatabadi(1982,1983), Malekzadeh(1949), Kasravi(1951) and Browne(1910).

protesters, representing different guilds and states, took sanctity in the British league compounds in a northern suburb of Tehran. Their ranks were even joined by the later anti-constitutional mullah Sheikh Fazl O'llah Nuri as well as the modernist intellectuals of the Dar al-Funun polytechnic. It was during this protest, when the demand for the creation of a house of justice was turned into a demand for the establishment of a national representative parliament (*majlis melli*), a crucial shift which was to a large extent influenced by the modernist intellectuals of Dar al-Funun (Abrahamian 1982, 84-85). After some bloody confrontation between the government forces and the revolutionaries on August 5, Mozaffar al-Din Shah (r.1896-1907) signed a declaration promising the convening of the Parliament and appointed Mushir al-Duleh, a politician with liberal tendencies as the prime minister (Abrahamian 1982, 85).

The first parliament was inaugurated in October 1906, and the deputies immediately began to draft a constitution or a Fundamental Law and had it signed by the moribund Mozzafar al-Din Shah, on December 30th, just five days before he died (Abrahamian 1982, 88-89). The new Shah, Mohammad Ali Shah, was not willing to give up his power which, especially as a result of the ratification of a Supplement to the Fundamental Law, gave most of the power to the legislator, at the expense of the Shah. The Shah first refused to acquiesce and denounced the leading constitutionalists as heretics. But soon, because of large public protests in many cities across the country, he retreated and vowed to ratify the Supplement to the Fundamental Law. However, in December 1907 the Shah recruited

the important service of Sheikh Fazl O'llah Nuri, started agitating against the Constitutionalists, but again retreated in the face of public protest by pro-Constitutionalists forces (Abrahamian 1982, 94-95).

In June 1908 the Shah staged a coup, bombarded the Majlis, arrested 39 of the Constitutionalists and executed four of his leading and outspoken opponents. The counter-revolution seemed to be successful in Tehran for a while, but in the provinces there was a different story. Within a year the revolutionary forces, beginning in Tabriz the capital of Azarbajejan province, the revolutionaries defeated the royalist forces, and with the help of some the tribal armed troops marched on Tehran on July 13, 1909 and ended the civil war. Soon the Parliament was reconvened. It deposed the Shah and declared his 12 year old son Ahmad as the new Shah. The new parliament also set up a tribunal and tried and executed five outspoken opponents of the movements, including Nuri (Abrahamian 1982, 97-100).

The dual mode of the appropriation of modernity reflected in the discourse of the late 19th century and early twentieth century of Iranian intellectuals can also be traced in the Constitutional movement. This dualistic nature of the Constitutional movement has only recently been recognized by scholars of Iran's modern history and sociology. As Said Amir Arjomand has pointed out,

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 to 1911 was both a nationalist revolution and a democratic revolution and has commonly been recognized as such. This characterization, however, does not do justice to the teleology of the Constitutional Revolution in that it leaves out a primary goal-- *the* primary goal for many of the participants --of that revolution: the reform of government, creating a

strong state capable of overcoming Iran's backwardness (Arjomand 1988, 35; emphasis original).

One can find the institutional manifestations of the democratic trend in the Constitutional Movement in the numerous Associations (*Anjomans*) which were created in the late 19th century and flourished during the Constitutional Movement and culminated in the creation of the parliament. To be sure, the positivist trend as manifested in statist and developmentalist tendencies were present in the Associations and the Parliament, but, at least in the beginning, they were not its primary institutional determination.³¹ Rather, the executive, theoretically subservient to the parliament but independent in actuality, was increasingly the primary institutional manifestation of the positivist tendency, which came to full force, as we will see in the next chapter, with the advent of Reza Shah. Yet, even long before the coming to power of Reza Shah, this tendency was clearly visible in the preference of some of the prominent Constitutionalists in appointing Amin al-Sultan, the heavy handed and pro-absolutist premier under Naser al-Din Shah, as the prime minister of the new constitutional government in 1907 (Arjomand 188, 42).

This duality is also to some extent reflected in the text of the constitutions and its supplement. To this duality in the constitution, however, a third dimension is added, namely the religious debate, which since Afghani shifted the discourse of modernity toward

³¹By designating the Associations as the institutional nuclei of the more democratic trend, I do not intend to ignore the role that some "progressive" Associations played in contributing to the chaos that increasingly engulfed Iran at this time, thus paving the way for the opposite trend to take over.

theological turf. Thus, according to article 35 of the Supplement to the Fundamental Law, sovereignty is divided between three entities, God, the people and the Shah: "Sovereignty is a trust confided, as a Divine gift, by the people to the person of the king".

This symbolic tripartite division of sovereignty in the text of the Fundamental Law and its Supplement gives mutually contradictory and sometimes overlapping powers to the people, the executive headed by the Shah and the clerics, at least on the theoretical level. Thus, according to article 2 of the Fundamental Law, "The National Consultative Assembly represents the entire people of Iran who participate in the economic and political affairs of the country". The creation of laws according to article 15 of the constitution is the prerogative of the National Consultative Assembly, which after ratification by the Shah, must be executed. But, article 45 allocates half of the 60 of the Senate seats, to be appointed by the Shah which according to article 46 must ratify the legislation of the National Assembly before it becomes law.³² On the other hand, the Supplement to the Fundamental Law reflects the struggle and compromise between the secular and religious elements within the movement as well as those religious personalities who at one point or another supported absolutism. Of crucial importance was the designation of a committee of five Shi'i doctors to hold a veto power to insure that laws passed by the Parliament would be in conformity

³²These conditions are all on the theoretical level, since the Senate was not convened for another four decades and, in any event, with the advent of Reza Shah and during the reign of his son Muhammad Reza Shah after 1953, the Constitution all but in nominal sense, shelved.

with Islam.³³ The second section of the Supplement contains articles pertaining to the rights of the people and as such might be considered a Bill of Rights. According to article 8 of the Supplement, Iranians are to enjoy universal and equal rights before the state, i.e., before secular law. But the universalistic spirit of this principle is violated by article 58 of the Supplement which bars non-Muslims from holding cabinet positions.

The contradictions in the Constitution of 1906 must be traced back to the ideological battle between the forces of constitutionalism and anti-constitutionalism which took place largely in the form of religious discourse immediately before and during the revolution. The central figures in the dispute were both high caliber theologians. One, as we saw above, was the great Mojtahehd of Tehran, Sheik Fazl O'llah Nuri who was on the side of absolutism. The other was Mirza Mohammad Hussein Naini (d.1927) who lent his theological skills to the cause of the Constitution. In the remaining pages of this chapter I will discuss their theoretical debate concerning the derivation of a respective pro and anti-modern position from the same source, that is, Islam, and bring this chapter to a conclusion.

Naini, as a Mojtahehd, was active in the Constitutional Revolution in Iran as well as in Iraqi politics.³⁴ His book, *Tanbih al-Ummah wa Tanzih al-Millah* (The Education of the Nation and Refinement of the People) was published in 1909, just as the physical and ideological forces of constitutionalism and anti-constitutionalism were involved in battle and debate. The pair concepts of freedom and equality

³³Again, this provision also remained at the theoretical level as the five member committee was never convened.

³⁴For a biography of Naini, see Hairei 1977.

constitute the foundation of the pro-constitutional argument of Naini.

He criticized the anti-constitutional forces for portraying the "innocent" (*mazlum*) principle of freedom as corruption and dissemination of heresy. Freedom and equality, he maintained, constitute the mainstay of any polity and therefore the protection the state and the monarchy. But the anti-Constitutionalists have tried to depict freedom and equality as license and immorality. As he put in his rather arcane prose,

since the substance of happiness and national life and limitation of monarchy and the responsibility [which] strengthens [the monarchy] and the protection of national rights is based on these two principles [freedom and equality]-- hence they [the anti-Constitutionalists] have turned these two great Divine Gifts into such obscene features... (Naini 1955, 37).

In order to rebuff his absolutist critics, Naini reasoned that the reasons for the rapid progress of early Islam were the two principles of freedom and equality, even equality between the ordinary person and the Caliph, which constituted the justice found in the early Islamic state (Naini 1955, 49). Naini then criticized the conservative ulema who, while derived so many rules from the slightest remarks of Shi'i Imams, were not able to recognize the two principles of freedom and equality as constituting the core of the teachings of Islam. Interestingly, he attributed the relative progress of Westerners to their appropriation of these Islamic principles and the consequent retrogression of Muslims themselves to their forgetting of them (Naini 1955, 59-60).

Naini's approach to the question of freedom for all is closely connected to his views on the restriction of absolutism and the Muslims developing consciousness of their rights,

At this juncture ...the era of Muslims' retrogression has reached the final point and enslavement under the rapacious and tyrannical whim of oppressors has expired. The accursed and doomed enthrallment is dead. All Muslims, through the good guidance of spiritual leaders informing them of the requirements of their religion regarding their God-given freedom, have [liberated] themselves from the despotic rule of national pharaohs and have become conscious of their legitimate national rights and their [rights] to participate and be equal in all affairs with the oppressors (Naini 1955, 3-4).

In a bold departure from traditional views of government, Naini condemned the despotic and "proprietary" characteristic of the state and the ruler as the "owner" of everyone and everything (Naini 1955, 8). Moreover, he expanded this condemnation of despotism to "celestial despotism". Thus he distinguished between, on the one hand terrestrial despotism, operated by the state and dominating bodies, and celestial despotism controlling the hearts and souls of people, on the other. Interestingly, among the forms of domination, he believed that the celestial to be more dangerous and more difficult to fight against (Naini 1955, 27).

It is of crucial importance to realize the central role that consciousness played in Naini's discourse against despotism. Referring to despotism, he wrote, "the origin of this corrupt plant [i.e., despotism] is merely the lack of knowledge of the people regarding the responsibilities of ruling [*sultanat*] and the common rights of the species; and its [despotism] foundation is based on lack of

responsibility and accountability and liability" (Naini 1955,10). Naini also criticized the absolutist position which held the masses ineligible to have a say in governing by retorting that first, in Islam government is based on consultation (*shura*) and second, because they pay taxes the people must have a say in the running of their affairs (Naini 1955, 87-9).

Naini's discourse was grounded in a core concept which he ingeniously derived from Islam and particularly Shii history. He introduced the notion of *iba* , literally meaning disobedience or defiance. He attributed the actions of the Shii's third imam, Hussein Ibn Ali who challenged the tyrannical rule of the Muawiyeh and was martyred for it in 680, as an act of *iba* and defiance (Naini 1955, 24-25). Thus he gave a positive connotation to a notion which has traditionally had mostly negative overtones and thereby transformed it into the grounding of the notion of freedom. This conceptualization brings Naini very close to a notion of subjectivity, yet derived from and couched in terms of venerated Shii tradition as well as Islam. He considered "God-given" freedom as liberation from "plant existence" and the "morass of bestiality" as one of the most important goals of God's prophets (Naini 1955, 28). Moreover, Naini thought that subjectivity is only possible when universalized, since absolutism is the negation of these two combined. He contended that "intimidation, terror and persecution", as one of the pillars of absolutism, was intended to "uproot the pure plant of defiance [*iba*] and freedom [*huriyat*], preventing its dissemination to the public..." (Naini 1955,117-118).

These rather abstract principles constitute a foundation for Naini's discourse on social and political principles. One such principle was the idea of rights for the people of the East and its importance for their struggle against Western imperialism. He pointed out that the British ruling classes have to behave responsibly toward their own people because the latter were "awake" and knew their rights. But toward their Indian "slaves" their behavior is despotic because the Indians were in a deep slumber and lived in a state of senselessness (Naini 1955, 44). He also explicitly called for a National Consultative Assembly dropping the Islamic qualification that some of the proponents of absolutism demanded, whose deputies would be responsible to every individual in the country as the electorate (Naini 195, 15).

Naini advocated the separation of powers, justifying it not only in terms of Islamic tradition but also in terms of Iran's pre-Islamic history and thus creating a secular precedent (Naini 1955, 102-3). During the course of the ideological battle between the modernists and the anti-modernists the thorny issue of the extension of the principle of universality to the non-Muslim minorities within the nation was a source of contention (Martin 1989, 129). The absolutists rejected any notion of extending equal citizenship rights to those religious minorities who had lived in Muslim societies but had to pay a special tax (*jazyah*) and were considered inferior to Muslims, i.e. the Christians, the Zoroastrians and the Jews. Naini's liberal views called for the participation of "non-Islamic sects" in the electoral process by electing one among their rank, since even though they were not expected to be loyal to Islam, they would have good

will towards their fatherland (*vatan*, i.e. Iran) and that would be sufficient for participation (Naini 1955, 98). In a similar vein, Naini viewed freedom of the pen and speech as an aspect of God-given freedom that is necessary for liberation from despotism (*taghut*) and for raising consciousness of the people and restoration of their usurped rights (Naini 1955, 123-124).

One of the most difficult problems that the Constitutionalists faced was the question of positive legislation and its implications for the Divine Law. The opponents of Constitutionalism rightly pointed out that positive law being created by human agency as legislation stood in opposition to the Divine Law whose principles and texts were immutable. Naini's response to this objection was a simple one. In his analysis Islamic law consisted of two distinct categories. The primary laws based in the Quran and the other known Islamic principles were unchangeable. But, secondary rules of Islam were subject to change depending on temporal and spatial circumstances, which would make the proper sphere for legislation.

While Naini derived from Islam a discourse-- even though not always consistent-- in support of modernity, his arch rival and detractor, Sheikh Fazl O'llah Nuri (d.1909), working with the same material arrived at opposite conclusions. Nuri, at the time of the Constitutional Revolution was probably the leading theologian in Tehran with a large following. He had studied in prestigious Shii shrine cities of Iraq for many years before he returned to Tehran sometime in the 1880s. He had participated in political protests such as the protest of 1891-2 against a tobacco concession to the British and later in protest against governmental loan policies (Martin 1989,

58). He even briefly supported the cause of the Constitutionalists immediately before the culmination of the Constitutional revolution and the declaration of acceptance of a constitutional regime by Mozzafar al-Din Shah on August 5, 1906, but soon became the leader of ideological assault in the total battle waged by the new Shah, Mohammad Ali, against Constitutionalism.

Nuri placed the thrust of his argument against Constitutionalism by focusing the two principles of freedom and equality based on universality within the nation-state. In contrast to Naini, he thought the entire edifice of Islam was based on *ubudiyat* and not freedom. The term *ubudiyat* is derived from the Arabic root *abd*, meaning slave. A cognate of *ubudiyat* is *ibadat* which means worship of God. Thus, according to Nuri, *ubudiyat* characterizes the existential state of humans vis-a-vis God, which forecloses any possibility of freedom. He also rejected the modern principle of universality within the nation-state because it would make Muslims and non-Muslims equal. He expresses these views very succinctly in the following passage,

Islam is founded upon *ubudiyat* and not freedom and the edifice of its laws based upon discrimination and generalization reflecting differences and not equality; hence, according to the Law of Islam we should hold equal those whom the Divine Law holds equal and treat differently those classes that Islam holds different from other classes (Nuri 1983, 59).

There is, however, an important twist in Nuri's discussion of universality. He did not object to the principle of universality as such, rather to its modern manifestation in the nation-state. Thus, he

advised non-Muslims seeking equality with Muslims to accept Islam to enjoy equality with Muslims (Nuri 1983, 60).

Nuri's opposition to freedom in general was channeled into his fulminating against freedom of speech and press which he considered as a forum for the dissemination of the blasphemous views of heretics and infidels and therefore negating the Divine Law in many respects (Nuri 1983, 60).³⁵ He attacked the concept of humans creating law in terms of vacuity of modern positive legislation and by criticizing the concept of *Qanun* or secular positive law. He argued that the forgers of secular law created an order from their "imperfect" reasons and named it *Qanun* and went along with it merely to fulfill their appetites. They created a system in which punishment is the only method of enforcement and otherwise there are no heartfelt goads to obedience (Nuri 1983, 111). In another passage he severely criticized the practice of parliamentary representatives elected by the "masses" (*ra'aya*) forging laws based in the opinion of the majority of the denizens of the nation-state and conforming to the two "evil" principle of freedom and equality instead of principles of Islam (Nuri 1983, 64). Nuri's argument against a representative parliamentary system was rooted in the Shi'i theoretical principles that during the absence of the infallible Imams and the Occultation of Imam of the Age, the running of the affairs of the community devolves to the ulema as deputies of the Imam of the Age (Nuri 1983, 67). Thus, he confined the legitimacy of

³⁵Nuri specifically lamented that freedom of speech would result in the publication of the "French Voltaire's" books which are full of imprecations against prophets and Bab's and Bahaullah's books and writing (Nuri 1983, 268).

representation and deputyship only to this Shii formulation, rejecting popular sovereignty exercised through parliamentary representation.

Nuri's impact on Iran's encounter with modernity was considerable since he managed to insert in the supplement to the Fundamental Law as Article Two the requirement that all laws passed by the *majlis* to be in conformity with Islam and the designation of a committee of five Mojtaheds with veto power to oversee this conformity. However, after the defeat of the absolutists and the hanging of Nuri himself, the Islamic context of the discourse on modernity waned and became dormant for the next few decades to be rekindled, as we will see in Chapter 5, in the 1960s.

Deepening the Discourse of Subjectivity and Social Democracy

While the intellectual scene in Iran was deeply involved in a debate over modern political thought, in the radical branch of the Constitutional movement there was an attempt by intellectuals and political activists to thematize an expansion and radicalization in the concept of subjectivity. This expansion was meant, on the one hand, to transcend the mere political sphere to which subjectivity was confined and penetrated the economic sphere, and on the other hand, to go beyond the urban middle classes and affect Iranian peasants and the newly created urban working class.

To be sure, this radicalization of subjectivity was immanent in the concept of universalizable subjectivity, but mainly because of class interests, its expansion and radicalization was resisted. During the course of the Constitutional movement, however, two factors

contributed to the radicalization of the discourse of subjectivity in Iran. One was the influence of socialist and Marxist thought, filtering to Iran through the Russian and Caucasian radicalism. The other was a limited but effective arousal of consciousness of conflicting class interests among the participants in the Constitutional movement. Later in Iran, as in many other countries this radicalization and expansion of subjectivity was reduced to a quest for a collective subject, thereby negating the very principle of subjectivity.

In the course of Iran's encounter with modernity developed in the late 19th century, we can find some references to the concepts of social and economic justice in the writings of Malkum Khan, Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani and Talebuf, even though these references were left relatively undeveloped by these thinkers and not transformed into major themes. They constitute, however, the beginnings of the deepening and radicalization of modern social thought in the Iranian context. The issue of the selling of the state lands to peasants, for example, was raised by Malkum Khan half a century before the Constitutional Revolution(Adamiyat 1976, 273). Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani also discussed themes pertaining to equality in wealth, restriction of ownership, elimination of social privileges and securing social rights for workers (Adamiyat 1976, 270). In the 1880s Sismondi's book Nouveaux Principes d'Economic Politique (1819) was translated into Persian and seems to have influenced the radicalization of the discourse on modernity in Iran (Adamiyat 1976, 271-273).

However, it was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that ideas pertaining to social and economic justice and the

inadequacy of more formal democracy are elaborately broached in Iranian discourse on modernity. For example, Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (d.1955) published a series of articles in the influential newspaper *Sur Esrafil* published during the climax of the Constitutional Revolution. In these articles Dehkhoda correctly recognized the bulk of Iran's population comprised of landless peasants and as long as they did not own the parcel of land they cultivated, the talk about political rights and freedom would be meaningless. He specifically designated ownership of land as the pre-requisite for peasants' freedom (Adamiyat 1976, 275). Dehkhoda also deemed justified the use of violence by peasants in demanding the restoration of their "usurped national rights" even thought he advocated the recompensation of landlords as the primary recourse financed by the creation of a national agricultural bank (Adamiyat 1976, 276-77).

Beginning in early twentieth century Iranian radical thought and praxis was closely connected to, and fed by, the radical thought and praxis in Russia and mostly mediated through the Caucasian link. The Himat party was one of the earliest parties established in Baku in 1904 which was a branch of the large Social Democratic party of Caucasia (Adamiyat 1975, 13). Then in 1905 the Iranian Social Democratic Committee whose founders were Iranian was formed. Shortly thereafter the branches of the Social Democratic Party were established in different cities inside Iran including Mashad, Tehran, Tabriz and Rasht. These branches of the Social Democratic Party had close connections with many of the Associations (*Anjomans*) during the Constitutional Revolution and sometimes their memberships overlapped.

In this period, before the Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist thought caused the sclerosis of Iranian radical thought, two approaches toward political democracy were visible in these circles. The first approach viewed social and economic justice in terms of the expansion and unfolding of the newly established political democracy and its institutionalization in the Parliament and the Constitutional state apparatus. The second tendency approached political democracy as antithetical to any notion of social and economic justice. The first tendency was perhaps best represented by Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh (d.1954), one of the central figures of the Hamiyat party who, as I will discuss in the next chapter, founded a democratic socialist discourse in the region in opposition to the Marxist-Leninists and the Bolsheviks. The adherents of the second tendency usually resorted to violent methods, during the Constitutional movement and had established terrorist organizations parallel to their political organizations.

In the next chapter, I will follow up the course of development of radical thought in Iran. However, this development must be considered in the larger context of the eclipse of universalizable subjectivity on the one hand, and a simultaneous search for a collective subject by most of the radical intelligentsia, on the other hand, which together constitute the major themes of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Eclipse of Universalizable Subjectivity and The Quest for a Collective Subject

Before I discuss the processes of the eclipse of universalizable subjectivity and the overwhelming triumph of positivist subjectivity and their consequences, it is necessary to consider briefly the socio-political conditions of Iran in the period between the establishment of the constitutional parliamentary system in 1909 and the advent of Reza Shah after World War I. The socio-political conditions of Iran in this period may be best described as chaos and disintegration caused by the civil war of 1906-09, foreign intervention and military occupation, extreme political factionalism and conflict, feuds among tribes and their domination of politics, and later the emergence of potentially separatist movements rooted in the assertion of newly discovered ethnic rights. Technological deficiency and lack of economic development compared to Europe and America in the 20th century, as seen by Iranian intelligentsia, also contributed to the moving away from Iran's initial dualistic encounter with modernity and toward the holistic embracing of positivist modernity.

After the Civil War of 1906-09 and the defeat of the absolutist forces, Iran increasingly became the object of domination and intervention by foreign forces, especially those of Britain and Russia. The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 practically divided Iran into a northern part as the Russian zone of influence and a southern British area of influence. By October 1910 the British forces landed on Iranian territory in the Persian Gulf and arrived in Shiraz and

Esfahan in central Iran, ostensibly to quell tribal rebellions and bloodshed. In November of the same year the Russians occupied the Caspian cities of Rasht and Anzali in the north, issuing the infamous ultimatum to the government in Tehran to dismiss the American Morgan Shuster and his mission who had started some serious and beneficial reforms in Iran's financial conditions (Abrahamian 1982, 108-109). A few years later during the First World War the Ottoman troops also occupied the western parts of Iran and German agents were engaged in arming the tribes (Abrahamian 1983, 103).

As we saw in chapter three, some of the tribes were instrumental in the victory of the constitutional forces in the civil war. But after the restoration of the Parliament, the domination of the political scene by the Bakhtiyari tribe and the resultant rivalry among the different tribes and tribe factions led to further chaos, insecurity and pillage which was used by the British to justify their occupation of central regions of Iran. The rivalry among political factions in the parliament (Majles) and outside also resembled feuds. After the restoration of the Parliamentary system in 1909 and the convening of the second Majles, as early as 1910 two political parties emerged within the Majles, as well as their affiliated organizations outside the Majles. The Democratic Party (*Ferqeh-ye Demokrat*) mostly represented the radical intelligentsia rooted in the Associations (*Anjomans*) and was connected, through the Caucasian link, to Russian radicalism. The Moderates (*Etedalion*) on the other hand, represented the ulema, the merchants and high ranking bureaucrats who were mostly pro-constitution, but whose ranks were increasingly joined by the conservative and sometimes reactionary

landlords, tribal chiefs and erstwhile absolutists. The conflict between the Democrats and the Moderates came to a convulsive head when four members of the armed faction of the Democrats assassinated the highly influential cleric and veteran of the Constitutional Revolution, Seyyed Abdullah Behbahani in 1909. The consequences of such conflicts were the exile of some of the leaders of the Democrats, such as Taqizadeh (1878-1969), who were implicated in the assassination and armed clashes between the supporters of the two political parties in the capital (Abrahamian 1982, 106-107).

By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, partly in response to foreign occupation of Iran, partly due to the arousal of ethnic rights, and partly as localized efforts to rectify the near collapsing situation, there emerged local and often radical movements with certain separatist tendencies. The three movements of Jangal (Jungle) in the forested areas of northern Iran, the Khiabani movement of Tabriz in Azarbeyjan and the movement led by Colonel Pesiyan in Khorasan in Western Iran were the most prominent among such movements.¹

These disintegrating and chaotic forces created a milieu in which the preliminary stages for the eclipse of the emancipatory moments of modernity and overarching triumph of positivist modernity were set. In other words, at this stage Iran's dualist encounter with modernity in which universalizable subjectivity and positivist subjectivity existed side by side, gave way to a situation where

¹ In addition to these movements in this period, there were outlaws who ruled a town or a region independent of the central government such as Nayeb Hussein Kashi in the city of Kashan (Arjomand 1988, 59).

positivist subjectivity became the dominant force in culture, society and the state, and resulted in the arrest of development of civil society.

Intellectuals and the Eclipse of Universalizable Subjectivity

In 1942 Ahmad Kasravi, whose thought I will examine below, made the following comment about this period,

All Iranians with a grain of awareness are saddened by the backwardness of their country...What lies at the root of this drastic decline? At the beginning of this century, reformers could claim that the main culprits were the despots who had a vested interest in keeping their subjects ignorant and unenlightened. After twenty years of constitutional government, however, we cannot in good conscience give the same answers. We now know that the main blame rests not with rulers, but with the ruled. Yes, the chief reason for underdevelopment in Iran, perhaps in most Eastern countries, is disunity among the masses (Abrahamian 1980, 112).

Kasvari's statement above reflects the general intellectual mood of disillusionment with experimentation with the development of civil society in Iran after the Constitutional Revolution and gradual turn to positivist aspects of modernity. The most important theme that emerged in the period was the notion of national unity (*vahdat-e melli*) to prevent and reverse the disintegration of the country. This theme was heralded by intellectuals of diverse persuasion from within the country and abroad. Three magazines --Kaveh and Iranshahr, published in Berlin and Ayandeh, published in Tehran-- were instrumental in the dissemination of the central idea of national unity and the related sub-themes (Entekhabi, 1993). As early as the

close of World War I, Taqizadeh, the radical pro-constitutional activist who had been exiled as a result of his involvement in the assassination of Behbahani, picked up the theme of national unity in his magazine *Kaveh*, established in Berlin in 1916. In one of the issues after World War I, Taqizadeh articulated the goal of *Kaveh* to be, "more than anything, the dissemination of European civilization in Iran, campaigning against fanaticism and serving to preserve Iran's nationhood and national unity..." (Entekhabi 1993,192). The contrast between Taqizadeh's earlier assessment of the vitality of national life as a constitutional activist and his later views are instructive in this regard. In his 1906 essay, worth quoting at length, he wrote,

Today the nations of the world are divided into two types according to their political orientation. Some are "living" nations and some "deceased"...Some people would say that a nation is alive which possesses Law, [*Qanun*] and dead, conversely. Others would assume that the life and death of a nation depends on formal political independence. And another group believes that the difference [between alive and dead] lies in the availability of perfection of instruments of war and defense. But none of these is correct. The spiritual life of nations which can be considered eternal and perpetual is comprised of the individual national awareness that has been implanted in the make-up of those individuals. This means that, as the life and vigor of a living body is mediated by the vitality of each of its individual members and even the life, health, natural fervor and perfection of all its cells--in the same way national life also depends on the independence of each individual member who possesses independent awareness, movement and natural and innate fervor. [Such] individuals are in no need of an external protector, pivot, center of fervor, [external] source of duty and leader. This means that the actions of each member [of society] must be based on belief in universal imperative [*wujub a'ini*] ...To put it more plainly, in the army of the nation, the individual soldier should not look up to the standard bearer; his heart should not be annexed to the

collectivity and he should not expect the backing and support of the leader and chief. Each member of that nation and each individual of that collectivity [must] be a complete and proper nation and be a mobile cannon, a clamorous bomb and his veins and organs [should be] fed by the blood of self-dignity and "subjectivity" [*hakemiyat*] and his character developed with the stock of love of independence and nobility (Taqizadeh 1974, 337-8; emphasis added).

Such grandiloquence in describing the concept of universal subjectivity in earlier writings of Taqizadeh can be contrasted to his later pronouncements where his priorities have changed. Thus, regarding Iran's newly formed state under Reza Shah he wrote, "the four pillars of this independence and civilization, in my opinion, are national unity, security, reform of the bureaucracy , especially the treasury, and reform in the principles of national sovereignty and national representation" (Taqizadeh 1974 , 37).

The same emphasis on the concept of national unity was promulgated by Mahmud Afshar in his magazine *Ayandeh*, meaning the future,

[N]ational unity is today one of the most important international questions and realities. Whether we want it or not, in the future our nation will enter this political current and this reality will one day become the pivot of our state politics as it has become the axiom of most states, especially the Ottomans. Every politician must be well aware of this, since national unity is the common border between domestic and foreign policy" (Afshar 1926, 564).

Earlier in a prelude to the first issue of *Ayandeh*, Mahmud Afshar had proclaimed national unity as the goal and intention of his magazine. He defined national unity in terms of political, ethical and social unification of the peoples living in the contemporary

boundaries of Iran (Afshar 1925, 5). This entailed not only preservation of Iran's political independence and territorial integrity but also, universalization of Persian language, elimination of regional differences with regards to clothing and mores, removal of decentralized sovereignty by local magnates (*Mulak al-Tavayef*) and homogenization of different ethnic and tribal groups (Afshar 1925, 5).

Thus, the idea of national unity implied a centralization of the country by a strong and centralized state. This idea was voiced by Taqizadeh in an article in 1926. In this article Taqizadeh presented the view that creation of a strong central government was the essential prerequisite for reform and progress, releasing the country from foreign pressure and intervention, evacuation of foreign occupying forces, and for establishment of security and elimination of decentralized sovereignty by local magnates (Taqizadeh 1974, 44-5).

In the intellectual scheme for the transition to positivist modernity, the central and strong state required a strong personality, an "enlightened despot" to implement the switch to positivist reforms. In an article in the magazine *Iranshahr*, edited by Hussein Kazemzadeh (1883-1962) who later adopted *Iranshahr* as his own surname, this idea is bluntly expressed by a certain Aljay Afshar, who believed that a Peter the Great could be "a thousand fold" more effective than the "committees, meetings and commissions". Significantly, she claimed that the majority of Iranian people could not relate to the "truth" of constitutionalism, republicanism and freedom, as she proclaimed that,

I believe that Iranians would not sweep their front door, would not light their front door's light, would not give their yard's rubbish to the municipal cleaners by their own hands. An enlightened and open minded reformer is needed to sweep our front door every morning by force; light our streetlights by force; reform and homogenize our clothes by force; reform our education by force; prevent the rackets of the National Assembly by force...purge our imperial court by force...prevent the intervention of the clerics in politics and politician in spiritual affairs by force; select, by force, [members] of the [National] Consultative Assembly from among those who can distinguish between the Pasteur Institute and a cowbarn; organize our coffeehouses, dairy shops, grocery shops and apothecaries by force. We need an enlightened reformer to make education for men and women compulsory by force and the power of bayonet and whip...even to determine the hours of our sleep and awakening and eventually lift the screen of illusions before our eyes by force...(Afshar 1923, 139-140).

Aljay Afshar concluded her article by expressing the anguish that what if a "Lenin, a Mikado or a Kemal Pasha," would not be found to "balm our pains" and "impose happiness" on us (Afshar 1923, 140).

The unification of the country entailed two implications. One was the creation of unified national military and the other was the expansion and streamlining of the national bureaucracy. For example, Taqizadeh expressed the need for both a strong military and efficient bureaucracy as the prerequisites for unification of the country (Taqizadeh 1974, 38). In an article published in 1927 Taqizadeh proposed a 12 to 15 year development plan for Iran in which he allocated the highest proportion of the country's budget amounting to 25% in the first year to the military to be increased to 32% by the end of the proposed period (Taqizadeh 1974, 96). These

ideas were translated into reality under the bureaucratic military regime of Reza Shah which by 1941 could boast of 127,000 men under arms and a bureaucracy 90,000 strong (Abrahamian 1982, 136).²

During the same period of transition leading to the eclipse of emancipatory modernity, the Iranian intellectual scene witnessed a near-obsession with industrialization and related categories of science, technology and the ideology of developmentalism. In the first issue of the magazine *Ayandeh* a long ode by a certain Badi' al-Zaman Khorasani praised the advent of the railroad in classical Persian poetic style, implying its necessity for Iran's modernization (Khorasani 1925, 26-27). Taqizadeh, on the other hand, pointed out the necessity of training Iranian technical personnel to replace foreign employees who traditionally provided Iran's technological needs (Taqizadeh 1974, 48). By 1934, Taqizadeh was advocating a curriculum for Iranian schools in which 70% of the subjects were devoted to modern natural sciences (Taqizadeh 1972, 229).³ However, as early as 1927, Taqizadeh had initiated a discourse of developmentalism in which he outlined Iran's course of economic development in terms of a twelve to fifteen year development plan (Taqizadeh 1974, 81-114).

²Amin Banani estimated the number of men that could be mobilized by the end of Reza Shah's rule as 400,000. See Banani 1961, 57.

³The materialization of this trend reached its highest point during the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah in the 1970's when philosophical and liberal arts subjects were virtually absent from school curricula and universities were mostly devoted to the production of engineers and medical doctors to the exclusion of fields more related to critical thought. This trend has continued in the Islamic Republic as the government discouraged the study of social sciences and humanities as "non-essential" fields, especially by Iranian students abroad, by cutting their stipends and not allowing even the use of their private funds for these fields in the early 1980s

What constituted another essential element in the transition to positivist modernity in this period was the emergence of the idea of nationalism grounded in nostalgia for Iran's past, especially the pre-Islamic period. Nationalism among the previous generations of Iranian intellectuals was comprised of a mixture of romantic notions about Iran's past and Iranian identity on the one hand and the idea of the rule of law and popular sovereignty on the other (Entekhabi 1993, 186). During this period of transition, however, nationalism grounded on nostalgia for Iran's pre-Islamic past mixed with the rendering of Arabs and Turks as the "other" gradually eclipsed any notion of nationhood which could, at least partially, ground itself in the idea of citizenship rights. The three magazines, Kaveh, Iranshahr, and Ayandeh exercised key influence in this development (Entekhabi 1993, 191). Each of these magazines published numerous articles discussing one or another aspect of ancient Iranian civilization, and glorifying Iran's pre-Islamic past. As Nader Entekhabi has pointed out, just the titles of some of the articles published in Iranshahr, for example, illustrate the obsession with Iran's pre-Islamic glories and the efforts to construct Iranian identity based on ancient history (Entekhabi 1993, 195).⁴ It was during this period also that an effort was made to associate the nostalgia-grounded nationalism with the revival of pre-Islamic Iranian monarchy. The crisis of monarchy precipitated by the disintegration of Iran had caused a clamor for republicanism in the

⁴Some of these titles include: "Stone Cuttings of the Sassanid Period"; "Iranshahr"; "Education in Ancient Iran"; "Khaqani and the Ruins of Madaen"; "Cuneiforms in Iranian Tablets"; "The War Committee of Dariush II"; "Ancient Industries of Iran", etc. Entekhabi 1993, 195.

1920s. Yet, republicanism could not serve the course of the new nationalism. Hence the marriage between the nostalgia driven nationalism and revival of ancient monarchy which proved to exclude any grounding of nationalism in the rights of citizens.

It is important to note that the support for the transition to a unipolar positivist modernity came from disparate quarters. The ulema initially supported the reforms of Reza Shah and his efforts at positivist nation-building. In fact the ulema represented the strongest opponents of republicanism and insisted upon the preservation of monarchy by transferring it from the Qajar to Pahlavi dynasty. The socialists represented by Rasul Zadeh, also voiced their desire for a unified and strong state in order to carry out necessary social reforms (Adamiyat 1976, 305). Even the communists supported the centralizing of the state apparatus after the defeat of Gilan Soviet Republic in northern Iran by Reza Khan (the title of Reza Shah before he became the new monarch) in 1923 (Ghods 1989, 74).

The convergence between the intellectual clamor for the unification of the country and the state building efforts of Reza Shah resulting in the unipolarization of modernity in Iran is clearly demonstrated in a meeting between Reza Khan who was at the time the prime minister and the members of the Young Iran Association (*Anjoman Iran Javan*). Ali Akbar Siasi, the founder of the association, has related that in March 1921, shortly after the establishment of the Young Iran Association, Reza Khan summoned members of this association asking them to explain to him the nature and purpose of their organization. To this query, Siasi responded

that their organization was made up of patriotic young men who were in agony because of Iran's backwardness and wished to fill the gap between European countries and Iran. Reza Khan after carefully reading the charter of their association assured them that what they "expressed in words," he "would carry out in practice" (Siasi 1983, 76-77).

It is interesting to note that one of the few voices of opposition to the eclipse of democratic thought and institutions was expressed by Mohammad Mossadeq, the future liberal prime minister of Iran who once again in early 1950s tried to revive some of the democratic institutions in Iran but failed as a result of the coup staged against him by the CIA. In 1925 Mossadeq opposed the transferring of monarchy to Reza Khan because he believed that a powerful monarch who was not accountable to any form of popular sovereignty, would violate the principles of the constitution for which much blood had been shed during the Constitutional Revolution (Mossadeq 1925, 228-233).

Notwithstanding Mossadeq's words of caution in 1925, Iranian intellectuals and statesmen at this juncture were involved in the process of shifting the dualistic appropriation of modernity in Iran to a unipolar determination, more or less unaware of the consequences. Perhaps the most eloquent manifestation of this shift was an article written by Ali Akbar Davar, a Majles deputy at the time and later Reza Shah's Minister of Justice who later fell out of favor and committed suicide. In this article entitled "Crisis" or *Bohran* Davar claimed that solution to the crisis facing Iran lay in abandoning concerns with democracy and pursuing a "rational" economic course

of development. Addressing the democratic reformers and using the Iranian staple bread (*nan*) as a metaphor for the economic situation he wrote,

The Foundation of our Crisis is Economic.... What is to be done? Think about bread. A poor nation, by the decree of nature, is condemned to all these afflictions.. You [i.e., democratic thinkers and reformers] thought that the principles of national sovereignty could be shoved down poor people's throats--that is why all of your effort and attention was spent on the discourse of freedom and equality and at the same time you wanted to spread foreign constitutionalism...[all over Iran] by the 'good offices' of the statesmen of the previous dynasty. Today, it seems, there is no room for doubt. You saw that you were in error and received no results...In the opinion of better qualified scientists the production of wealth is the foundation of ethics, culture and politics of the nations of the world...If you really want to reform the general conditions, revive and renew economic life...In short, seek bread, freedom will follow by itself (Davar 1926, 8-9).

Again I should emphasize that it is hard to imagine the future of any third world country without inevitable categories such as economic development, technology and science and even an active state. However, these should not be in a determining and commanding position and their existence should be subordinated to the democratic institutions and the democratic principles in the discourse of modernity. At any rate, this was not the case in Iran after the coming to power of Reza Shah in 1921. With the eclipse of universalizable subjectivity we witness a shift in the socio-political thought to a discourse imbued by nationalism, "anti-materialism" and utopianism on the one hand, and by Marxist-Leninist thought, on the other.

The Anti-Materialist, Utopian and Nationalist discourses of Iranshahr and Kasravi

In the previous section I mentioned Iranshahr's essential role in the transition to the unipolar appropriation of the discourse of modernity in Iran. But, Iranshahr's discourse continued beyond this period even though the influence of his thought had diminished after the period of transition. What makes an examination of his later discourse warranted, however, is its continuity with the discourse of Kasravi in the post-transition period which has left an indelible impression on the Iranian mind even to this day.

Hussein Kazemzadeh, (1884-1962), later known as Iranshahr because of the famous magazine he published by the same name, was born to a religious family in Tabriz. His father and brother practiced traditional Persian herbal medicine. He himself went to Istanbul to study modern medicine at the age of twenty but changed his mind because of events of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran and studied law in that city. In 1911 he enrolled in a college in Louvain in Belgium and received his baccalaureate in political and social sciences after one year. After spending a few years in Paris and then teaching Persian in Cambridge England, he went to Berlin in 1915 to join Iranian patriots there who were involved in planning to organize a military force in Iran to repel the occupation of Iran by foreign forces. After spending two years in Iran and Turkey and participating in these efforts to expel occupying forces from Iran, Iranshahr went back to Berlin in 1917 where he spent the next 19 years and published the magazine *Iranshahr* from 1922 to 1927. In

1936 Iranshahr left Germany and stayed until the end of his life in Switzerland and wrote many of his books and essays in Persian and German. During the later period of his life Iranshahr became aloof from the socio-political thought of his native country as he was the spiritual leader of a theosophical group in Switzerland.⁵

As we saw in previous sections Iranshahr was one of the key personalities in the development of Iranian nationalism grounded in nostalgia. But unlike many other nationalists of his period his discourse on nationalism contained a streak of "critique" of the West, often expressed as a critique of "Western materialism". As he spent more time in Europe, he gravitated more towards a position of dissatisfaction with what he considered the materialism of the West. In 1926 in an article published in his magazine, while acknowledging the contribution of The Enlightenment to the development of "human rights" and freedom of thought, he criticized the vacuity of human reason resulting in extreme materialism and corporealism and alienation from spirituality of God's grace which he hoped to be resolved in the future (Iranshahr 1926, 204-5). Even as early as 1924 Iranshahr criticized modern Western civilization for its predatory routine and ethos of domination and conquest of others and warned against the establishment of modern civilization in Iran which was being "imported into Iran by bayonet and at the expense of the blood of Iranian youth" (Iranshahr 1924, 449).

This disaffection with "Western materialism" led Iranshahr to seek a remedy which in his discourse culminated in a conceptual

⁵The biographical sketch of Iranshahr's life is taken from his son's, Kazem Kasemzadeh Iranshahr, account of the life of his father. See Iranshahr 1984.

dichotomy between the "mind" or the spirit on the one hand and the body, on the other. "Our error", he wrote, "stems from our lack of knowledge that we are constituted of soul and body and the soul is the primary and the body is the secondary. [The spirit] is the commander and the body the receiver of command and at its service... But we strive for the satisfaction of our body as we consider it to be our happiness and forget our souls altogether" (Iranshahr 1956, 24). Iranshahr also developed the notion of the "hierarchy of perfection" (*marahel u'ruj*), stating the "evolution" and perfection of the changing of being from the state of inanimate object to plant state, to animal state, to human state, to the realm of spirit (*malakut*), to the realm of power (*jabarut*) and finally arriving at the realm of Meaning (*Lahut*) (Iranshahr 1956, 45).

However, modern western civilization, Iranshahr reasoned, has gone in the wrong direction. It is true that the West has developed its rational power and has surpassed other nations, but since it uses this power against the natural path of "perfection" (*u'ruj*) and utilizes its "animal power" to plunder and dominate the weak, therefore the powerful hand of providence punishes the West and inflicts revolutions and bloodshed upon it. Thus some of the thinkers in the West have realized the sad state of modern civilization and try to raise their people's consciousness and even believe the demise of this civilization to be inevitable (Iranshahr 1956, 51-52).

The relatively elaborated mind-body dichotomy developed by Iranshahr constitutes, it seems, the ontological grounding of his utopian nationalism, whereby the downplaying of the realm of "body" and "matter" leaves little space for the development of

individual subjectivity. He did not explicitly elaborate this connection, but there is little doubt that his discourse contains the seeds of the departure from synthesis between the individual subject and the collectivity and movement toward the surrendering of the individual to the collectivity. In an article published in his magazine in 1923 he wrote,

Each of the individuals, classes and [political] parties of a nation may have different and individual objectives...But these [individuals within] nations in addition to individual nature and private objectives have a common and general, i.e., social and national, objective which is superior to individual objectives and annihilates them... (Iranshahr 1923, 67-8).

Iranshahr concluded this article by exhorting Iranians to be just like moths who annihilate themselves in the flame of a candle and know no love but the love of nationalism and Iranianness (Iranshahr 1923, 76).⁶

Iranshahr's influence inside Iran, after the period of transition which resulted in the eclipse of democratic thought and institutions and in which he played a crucial part, was relatively limited. In contrast, Ahmad Kasravi's discourse who continued and expanded some of the themes developed by Iranshahr, has exercised a considerable influence on nationalist discourse in Iran which continues even in our age. Kasravi's work and personality was multi-faceted and this is reflected in very disparate assessments of his work and personality. As Ervand Abrahamian has observed, to

⁶The reference to moths and the candle is drawn from classical Persian poetry in which the moths "annihilate" themselves in the flame of their beloved, represented by the candle.

some he was *the* theorist of modernity, while some considered him a "dangerous iconoclast" who tried to undermine the very foundation of tradition in Iran. Still others saw him the historian of the Constitutional Movement. Abrahamian himself regarded him as the "integrative nationalist of Iran" (Abrahamian 1980, 100). Indeed Kasravi was a historian of the Constitutional Movement and hence familiar with the ideas of that movement. He was also a theoretician and activist in the cause for unification and integration of Iran. But this makes him also one of the foremost theorists of utopian nationalism in Iran.

Seyyed Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1945) was born into a mula family in Hukmavar near Tabriz. His father, although he was an orthodox (*mutishar'i*) mullah, maintained good relations with the less orthodox, i.e., the Sheikhis and Karimkhanis, in his hometown (Kasravi 1960, 13). Kasravi's upbringing was very disciplined because of the expectation that he would continue the clerical line of his family. Kasravi at first received a traditional religious education but later in 1915 studied English at an American missionary school while teaching Arabic there (Kasravi 1960, 60). In the meantime, he had become familiar with the Constitutional Movement and developed sympathy for it. Between 1920 and 1930, Kasravi was employed by the Ministry of Justice which under Davar had the mission of secularizing and centralizing the legal procedures in Iran. It was during this period that Kasravi's work on the history of the Constitutional Movement was developed. In 1930, he was forced to resign his position in the Ministry of Justice because as the judge in a land dispute between Reza Shah who wanted to appropriate the

lands formerly belonging to the Qajar Shahs and the cultivators, Kasravi had adjudicated in favor of the cultivators. In the period between 1930 until he was assassinated by an Islamist group in 1946, Kasravi practiced law privately and developed and disseminated his ideas on utopian nationalism.

Before I venture on an analysis of Kasravi's discourse, the international political and intellectual milieu needs to be considered briefly. The disenchantment with liberal democracy in Europe manifested in the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the demise of any hope for democratic socialism as a result of Bolshevization and later Stalinization of radical movements and thought in the international scene could not have been without an impact in other countries such as Iran. Given the fact that socio-political and philosophical trends reach a country such as Iran after a delayed period, the early work of Kasravi was affected by the Constitutional discourse itself grounded in the liberal democratic tradition but in his later work he distanced itself from these traditions.

In his book *Varjavand Bonyad* (The Sacred Foundation), first published in 1943 and which contains many of his philosophical views, Kasravi criticized Western modernity and the violence prevalent in Europe especially the bloodshed during the Second World War. The "movement of science" or progress, he thought, has wreaked havoc in its European birthplace,

This [scientific] movement or progress, has not been beneficial by itself. Rather it has given rise to much harm. In Europe, which is the cradle of this movement, ever since these sciences have become prevalent and new gadgets for living...railroads, telegraphs, telephone, automobile, airplane, radio, etc.....are employed, life has become so much

more difficult to the point that many people escape not only the sciences but also civilization and seek to return to the simple life of the nomadic era. In Europe there is either war, insecurity and slaughter for the youth or unemployment and poverty for the masses (Kasravi 1961, 87).

Kasravi was not a pious man and lost his life because of his attacks on Shiism. Yet, as a part of the anti-materialist character of his discourse he attacked "materialism and atheism" (Kasravi 1944, 79). Just like Iranshahr, he also proposed a mind-body dichotomy in which the mind or *ravan*, stood for "reason, thought, understanding, modesty, humility and similar commendable characteristics". The body or *jan*, on the other hand, represented evil qualities such as "caprice, avarice, envy, wrath, spite, ostentation, sycophancy and tyranny" (Kasravi 1961, 31). Furthermore, these two, the body and mind, are like opposite essences and always in conflict. Once one side gains more power, the other side becomes weaker. The person whose mind is in control over the body keeps the latter in line and averts desire (*hava*) and other evil qualities. Conversely when the body becomes dominant, base qualities will take over the good and truth will be shunned (Kasravi 1961, 32). This is what has happened in Europe [i.e. the West] as the concern with the body and materialism has taken over,

In Europe as the sciences advanced the blunder of materialism occurred and this blunder became a great deception, with [grave] consequences. The pundits who considered the universe [to consist of] merely this tangible material system, did not view man but as corporal and sensual. They believed the wellspring of man's wants and deeds, just like the animals, to lie in selfishness and thus

believed conflict and struggle to be inevitable (Kasravi 1961, 38).

In order to overcome the problems of the modern world and rectify the tragedy caused by what he considered to be "materialism", Kasravi laid down the principles of a cosmology which very much resembles the 17th and 18th century Western notions of Deism. The very first section of his book *Varjavand Bonyad* starts with the claim that, "the world is an orderly and organized system".

In fact the foundation of Kasravi's cosmology is dominated by this notion of order and organization,

This is a systematized world in which needs are satisfied. It rotates and does not rest; it is never impaired. If we observe the rotation of the earth and the stars, or we look into the birth of humans and animals, if we consider the growth of trees and plants, they are all based on an order and everything has its place. The[reason why] sciences have advanced so much and each has created a great space for itself[is that], more than anything else, they discuss the order and orderliness of the world. And the more they advance, the more the order and greatness of the world comes to light (Kasravi 1961, 3).

Once Kasravi raised the issue of order he also had to address the related problem of meaning. If there is order in the universe, there must also be a purpose. Without elaborating on the nature of this purpose regarding this world, he asserted, "there is a purpose, [indeed] a great and valuable purpose" (Kasravi 1961, 4-5). Order and meaning, in Kasravi's discourse, require an active agent responsible for the creation of the universe. To be sure, as the human species, we belong to the top of the hierarchy of creation, but the ultimate will belong to the creator (Kasravi 1961, .8).

Accordingly, Kasravi assigned to humans the position of "overseer" and administrator of the orderly world created by God,

God has made us the overseer [*jahanban*] in this world. Just as a gardener who unroots the weeds, trims the trees and grows beautiful flowers, humans should treat the earth in the same manner (Kasravi 1961, 24).

Kasravi's orderly cosmology found its earthly social function in the need for religion which in turn, he deemed, was necessary for social order and social solidarity. Thus, despite his reputation as "iconoclast" and "anti-religious", Kasravi called for religion to serve the cause of social integration: "many see no need for religion. But there is much need for it. Religion is the high road of life. If it did not exist, each group would take up a different path and become misled and dispersed. If it did not exist, each person would seek his own interests and the social bond would be disrupted" (Kasravi 1961, 75).

The upshot of Kasravi's obsession with order and social integration was the formulation of an extreme puritanical rationality in which the category of "reason" qua order enjoyed the highest status. Kasravi became infamous for his extreme views against the elements of Persian culture which he found at odds with his notions on order and "rationality". He consistently denounced categories such as mysticism, intuition, poetry, metaphysics, lyrical and dionysian ideas expressed in Persian poetry and even philosophy, throughout his works. He even organized book burning rituals in which the books he and his followers deemed harmful to a rational social order were

destroyed. In his extreme "disenchanted" world, Kasravi did not have any space even for imagination. He wrote,

Imagination [*pendar*] is one of the basest human faculties. It is a bane [*asib*] in the world. All misleadings arise, more than anything else, from imagination...Sciences must be followed and their results must be accepted...Following imagination and speculation [*gaman*] and speaking of unfathomable categories' to mislead people...Those following this path must be warned and if they do reform and persist, they deserve death (Kasravi 1961, 164-165).

There is little doubt that in such a tightly ordered cosmology there is little space left for the development of the autonomous self-willing subject and the consensual congregation of their wills in intersubjectivity. In fact Kasravi, like many of his predecessors and contemporaries, reduced human subjectivity to a Faustian level of developmentalism: "God has created people and entrusted the earth to them to trim it, decorate it, develop it. [He] has entrusted [the earth to them] so that they establish cities, gardens and fields so that they may make the water flow, construct roads, fight disease and evil" (Kasravi 1961, 22). It must be noted that Kasravi favors this Faustian view of human agency despite his criticism of instrumental rationality as surrendering to the realm of the body discussed above. Rather, this developmentalism is in harmony with his cosmology of order, since it is subsumed in the orderly nature of the universe.

The question of citizenship rights is more complicated in Kasravi's discourse. In various writings from his earlier career as the historian of the Constitutional Revolution, to his latest writings in the 1940s, he advocated various aspects of democratic rights of citizenship and certain freedoms. For example in 1945, shortly before his

assassination, he wrote that constitutional democracy was the best form of government (Kasravi 1945, 51). More significantly, in the same essay, he wrote that, "Constitutionalism is not mere existence of laws and the Consultative Assembly. Constitutionalism has a more sublime meaning. Constitutionalism means that a people wants to run its own affairs; wants no one else to rule over it" (Kasravi 1945, 41). Here, despite Kasravi's emphasis on the democratic rights of the collectivity, he excludes the rights of the individual subject as citizen.

Such an exclusion of the individual citizen has its parallel in Kasravi's socio-ontological view of society. He believed the foundation of the society to be the same as that of the family, an idea which, as we saw in chapter two, constitutes the gist of the surrender of subjectivity to the collective (Kasravi 1961, 45). He expressed the same idea more explicitly in a later passage in the *Varjavand Bonyad*,

since people live in a social setting, their interests and losses are tied together. Ineluctably there must be a path that everyone can follow, and [thereby] everyone would know their limits. Otherwise, everyone would follow their own interests and conflict would arise and the social bond would break. If you establish a school or organize an association you would have to write a charter for it. How could it be that hundreds of millions of people would live together and would not need a charter or a path? Indubitably there must be a path. Now the question is whether people by themselves can make that path...It must be said that they cannot. If people could know [the difference between] good and evil and benefit and harm, what need would there be for the path? Obviously they cannot make a path on their own (Kasravi 1961, 76).

Kasravi's record was at its worst when it came to citizenship rights for women. Although he advocated certain limited rights and

freedoms for women such as the freedom to study and voting rights, he essentially viewed women as second class citizens, created by God to raise children and take care of the home for men (Kasravi 1945, 54-55). Thus he denied women the right to be elected to public office and serve as judges (Kasravi 1961, 237). In conjunction with the structure of patriarchy which informed Kasravi's discourse, the denial of women's rights, as in many other nationalist discourses, could be traced to the granting of rights first and foremost to the "nation" as a collective entity. Kasravi even went as far as demanding the "worship" of the fatherland by every Iranian (Kasravi 1961, 126).

Kasravi's discourse by itself was of much significance in the history of socio-political thought in Iran. But, as Hamid Dabashi has observed, his thought also served as a bridge for many Islamically oriented youth to shift to secular ideologies such as socialism and Marxism in the 1940s and '50s (Dabashi 1993, 46). In the next three sections I will discuss some of these discourses engendered by socialism and Marxism in the context of Iran's encounter with modernity.

Socialism and Universalizable Subjectivity: The Marxist Quest for a Collective Subject

At the end of Chapter 3, I started a discussion of the process of deepening and expanding subjectivity in leftists' discourse in Iran. In the following three sections of this chapter, I will continue this discussion since leftist thought constitutes such a crucial ingredient of Iran's socio-political discourse in the 20th century. I use the term

"leftist" to describe two closely trends, related at the beginning but later distinct and often opposite. Reflecting the international split between democratic socialists and Marxist-Leninists, the radical discourse in Iran started as a common critique of the shallowness and limited scope of the Constitutional Movement in Iran, soon to follow the international schism. In Chapter 3, I discussed the beginning of what would become the closest thing to democratic socialist discourse in Iran. In this section, I will discuss the initial Marxist-Leninist critique of modernity in Iran and the socialist response to it by Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh, who was a central figure in the short-lived democratic socialist tradition in Iran.

The first communist party in Iran (*Ferqe-ye Komonist-e Iran*; abolished in 1937) emerged from the Justice Party (*Ferqe-ye Edalat*) during the latter's first major conference in the Caspian port city of Anzali in June 1920. The party program of the new Communist Party first called for a series of ultra-radical measures such as immediate and radical land reform, violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the British imperialists and the monarchy and the pursuit of militant trade union policies and close alliance with Soviet Russia (Abrahamian 1982, 115; Zabih 1966, 29). But, soon the party toned down its rhetoric and its agenda reflected more of a pragmatic approach.

In their party organ, *Setareh Sorkh* (*The Red Star*) the communists criticized the inchoate nature of liberal democracy in terms of its potential to emancipate the masses of Iranian people. In an article published in *Setareh Sorkh* in 1929 the author attacked the

parliamentary system as such for not facilitating the emancipation of the people of Iran,

The Seventh Parliament in Iran, entirely corroborates and proves the view of the Communist Party of Iran regarding the principles of parliamentarism. Because in the opinion of the Communists, the parliaments in general could never be the real representatives of the people and could never protect the interests of the toiling classes. Moreover, as long as the present property relations remain and the state apparatus remains in the hands of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, it is absolutely impossible that the mass could entirely utilize its illusory and nominal "freedom" (Chaqueri 1993, 20).

The same article pointed out the shallowness and narrowness of mere legal and nominal emancipation by using the analogy that these legal and nominal freedoms granted by the constitutional system in Iran, "resemble a situation in which a thirsty person is taken to a deep well without being provided with any means of taking water to quench his/her thirst" (Chaqueri 1993, 21).⁷

The major theme that was addressed by the communist movement in Iran was the "agricultural question" and the distribution of land among the peasantry without which, as the Communist party argued, the emancipation of a predominantly agricultural society would be meaningless. Calling the Constitutional

⁷*The Red Star* was sophisticated enough to realize that under Reza Shah the parliamentary election in Iran was a sham as the Shah hand-picked the deputies himself. Nevertheless, the article represents a critique of the parliamentary system in general.

Revolution a bourgeois revolution, *The Red Star* criticized the movement for not solving the peasants' problem,

The bourgeoisie revolution in Iran [i.e., the Constitutional Revolution], has not solved the peasants' problem which is the problem of the majority of the nation, even though it was its most important responsibility and its historical mission (Chaqueri 1993,55).

What *The Red Star* considered liberation, however, was not the liberation of each individual member of society as an autonomous subject of modernity. Rather, as was typical of Marxist theory internationally, it distinguished its discourse in terms of collective class analysis in the process of the struggle for liberation, and empowerment,

What distinguishes us from all the known and unknown revolutionaries in Iran, from Mirza Aqa khan [Kermani] to Ehsanollah Khan and the rest of revolutionaries, old and new, is, first and foremost, our clear and firm understanding of the class nature of our struggle (Chaqueri 1993,60).

Furthermore, as the response to this article by the writers board of *The Red Star* elaborated,

As the bourgeois revolutionaries are concerned with protection of their own *class* interests, the Communist Party is the representative of the working *class* and struggles for the interests of workers, their definite emancipation and creation of the dictatorship of the workers. Because the interests of the workers and their emancipation is completely related to the interests and freedom of the majority of the great mass of toilers in society, therefore, in this struggle, the proletariat and the proletarian revolutionaries not only achieve the interests and liberation of the proletariat, but also liberate human

society and the world as such. This constructs the principle difference between proletarian and bourgeois revolutionaries (Chaqueri 1993, 63).

To complete the Marxist distortion of subjectivity, The Red Star added the Marxist-Leninist principles of "vanguardism" and "democratic centralism" to their agenda, thereby "particularizing" the already collectivized subjectivity. However, despite its distortion of the principle of universal subjectivity and the pursuit of a collective subject the role of the Communist party in raising the consciousness of the peasants and the small working class, especially in the oil-producing Persian Gulf area in Iran, cannot be ignored.

The challenge to this distortion, albeit short-lived, came from Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh (d.1954), an old hand in Iranian and later Turkish socialist and pan-Turkish movements. Rasulzadeh was one of the main organizers of the Democrat Party outside the Parliament Immediately after the victory of the Constitutionalists (Abrahamian 1982, 103). He published a newspaper called *Iran-e Nou (New Iran)* in early 1910s which rapidly became the widest circulated paper in Tehran (Abrahamian 1982, 104). He was born in Baku and studied political science in modern education system in the Caucasus. He was sent to Iran by the Caucasian Social Democrats to participate in the Constitutional Movement in Gilan and after the defeat of Mohammad Ali Shah and the restoration of the constitution in 1909, he became involved with the Democrat Party in Tehran. He was expelled from Iran in 1911 as the result of pressure from the Russian Embassy (Adamiyat 1975, 96-97). After his expulsion from Iran, he went to Istanbul but after two years, due to a general

amnesty in Russia he went back to Baku and participated in a social democratic party called Musavat. After the October Revolution in Russia, he was involved in the movement for the autonomous socialist republics of the Caucasus and their struggle against the centralizing attempts of the Soviet system. With the collapse of the autonomous regime in Baku and the occupation of that city by the Red Army in 1920, Rasulzadeh was arrested and sent to Moscow. But in 1922 he escaped from Moscow and after many years living in different European countries settled in Turkey in 1947.

Rasulzadeh's challenge to communist discourse belongs mainly to the period of his disillusionment with the Bolsheviks. But even in his earlier career when Rasulzadeh as a Marxist neophyte attacked private property as the cause of all trouble in human history and subscribed to the Marxian thesis of "immiseration" and the inevitability of revolution, his belief in the concept of class struggle stemmed from the impulse to expand and deepen the emancipatory moment of modernity. He reasoned that all constitutional governments and republics in which some type of popular sovereignty has now taken hold, have wrested this sovereignty from privileged classes by force and social struggle has always existed (Adamiyat 1975, 100). Rasulzadeh also reasoned that the subjectivity of modernity is still in a particularistic state and needs to be universalized. Thus, he wrote, constitutional laws of most countries have

given special privileges to special classes and have deprived the public of their rights. [Even in France] the people and democracy are not entirely liberated from the yoke of nobility and privilege. And still the property criteria are

prevalent in elections and the Senate which belongs to the privileged classes exist (Adamiyat 1975,109).

Rasulzadeh explicitly articulated the notion of the expansion and deepening of subjectivity when he said that the socialists, "in addition to political equality, also demand economic and social equality" (Adamiyat 1975,104). Yet, even in this period, Rasulzadeh believed in the principles of political democracy and Parliamentarism (Adamiyat 1975, 108;116-117).

However, it was after his disillusionment with the Bolsheviks that he developed his social democratic critique of Marxist-Leninist thought to its logical conclusions⁸. In an essay entitled "The Future of Democracy" (*Ayande-ye Demokrasi*), Rasulzadeh questioned the absolutism of collectivity as the sole function of the state.⁹ He wrote in that essay, "The implementation of absolute national sovereignty is the collective coercion [*jabr*] and despotism which is not much different from personal despotism, as exemplified by [Soviet] Russia" (Adamiyat 1975, 73). Rasulzadeh maintained that democracy was comprised of three principle which only works if they operate in a synthesis. These principles were, in his analysis, freedom, equality and the popular sovereignty of the people. He believed that if each of these principles became absolute and abstracted from others, then democracy could not be maintained. "Democracy is obtained through

⁸After his escape from the Soviet Union in 1922, Rasulzadeh commented that "the Communists from the Left and Fascists from the Right have made democracy the target of their lethal attacks" (Adamiyat 1975, 169).

⁹I have not been able to obtain a copy of the essays by Rasulzadeh that I have used in this section. However, Fereydun Adamiyat has elaborately quoted these essays in his book, *Fekr-e Demokrasi-e Ejtemai dar Nezat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran* (The Idea of Social Democracy in the Constitutional Movement of Iran), which I have utilized here.

the combination of those three independent elements," he noted (Adamiyat 1975, 174). More explicitly, Rasulzadeh attempted to reconcile the individual and the collectively. He believed that the principle which maintained equilibrium in contemporary society was "cooperation" which would reconcile the individual and the collectivity (Adamiyat 1975,180). In a related vein, he also recognized the principle of private ownership, provided it did not interfere with the rights of the collectively (Adamiyat 1975,180). He even gave a philosophical interpretation to the connection between the concept of rights and democracy which he believed to stem from the "Synthesis and combination of *fardiyat* or individualism and *koliyat* or universalism."(Adamiyat 1975,181).¹⁰ Thus, he concluded that democracy was comprised of "equality of rights arising from the combination of principles of individual freedom and popular sovereignty" (Adamiyat 1975, 182).

There is no doubt that Rasulzadeh's analysis was based on a radically revised metaphysical view as compared to Marxist-Leninist metaphysics, as he articulated a subjectivist ontology of freedom "[man] is not content with his life and cherishes in his soul the changing of conditions of the realm of necessity and...achieving the realm of freedom" (Adamiyat 1975, 198). So far this view did not deviate much from classical Marxian views. However, he rejected the Marxian reduction of subjectivity to human labor. Reflecting the maturity of European tradition of democratic socialism he refused to

¹⁰Rasulzadeh used both the Persian terms "*fardiyat*" and "*koliyat*" and the French transliteration of individualism and universalism in the original text.

bow to the orthodox Marxist notion of "labor fetishism", class struggle and class dictatorship,

The idea of establishing a worldly paradise devoid of any historical contextuality is an illusion...History is a road without an end. Its beginning and telos [are] unknown, [but] it always moves in the direction of betterment. The image which makes that possible is that humans in the end would become, as much as possible, free, [self-] willing and perfected beings.

In another but related essay he also wrote that,

By rejecting the idea that all values refer only to labor, and that no one else but the laborer has the right to live...we do not intend to inflame class antagonism artificially. European socialism, after much experience, is convinced of the bankruptcy of the abstract notion of [class struggle], a question which revolutionary socialism has raised without regard to its social and historical context...We oppose the dictatorship of class (Adamiyat 1975, 241).

By rejecting the Marxist reduction of subjectivity to labor, a process which may be referred to as "fetishism of labor", and rejecting a class dictatorship, Rasulzadeh remains one of the few radical thinkers in Iran who disavowed the very ruinous process of the quest for a collective subject. Unfortunately, however, the influence of Rasulzadeh on Iranian socio-political thought was limited, as he spent most of his life outside Iran and his discourse was much overshadowed by that of a much bigger rival, The Tudeh Party.¹¹

¹¹The relative paucity of Rasulzadeh's influence on the Iranian socio-political thought-- in addition to being overshadowed by "revolutionary socialism"-- might also be explained by his anti-Iranian positions when he was involved in the pan-Turkish movement in 1920's. See Entekhabi 1993, 197.

The Tudeh Party and Modernity

By the early 1930s the Communist Part of Iran was for all practical purposes dissolved. Most of its members were either in jail, killed, exiled to remote areas inside Iran or had fled the country. In June 1931, Reza Shah introduced a law according to which all organizations with a "collectivist ideology" were banned (Zabih 1966, 62; Abrahamian 1982,154).

While the old Communist party was declining in Iran, a new generation of young Marxist intellectual activists was being born. This new generation of Iranian Marxists was markedly different from their earlier predecessors in a number of ways. They were mostly highly educated young men of middle class background who had studied in Western Europe and not in Russia. They were also mostly Persian-speaking and not Turkic speakers or Armenians as was the case with the older generation of Marxists. In 1935 this group of young intellectuals formed a "study group" to discuss and propagate Marxist ideas without explicitly referring to their activities and studies as Marxist, for fear of being suppressed. This group latter became known as "The Fifty Three" because of the fifty three members of the group who were arrested and imprisoned in 1937 (Abrahamian 1982, 155). Late in 1941 the Tudeh Party was formed by the remaining members of the Fifty Three, but the foundation of its ideology was laid by a German educated Physicist named Taqi Arani who, as we will see below, had much influence on the development of "revolutionary socialist" thought in Iran.

The Founding of the Ideology of The Tudeh Party

Taqi Arani (1902-1940) was the central figure among the group Fifty Three. He founded the theoretical magazine of the group called *Donya*, (The World) in 1935, in which some of the philosophical and theoretical aspects of Marxism were discussed. Arani studied in Berlin between 1922 and 1928 and received his Ph.D. in physics there. He wrote a number of books on sciences, biology, psychology and theoretical books and essays on a scientific/materialist interpretation of socialism. The title of some of his works reveal much about his theoretical outlook: The Principles of the Science of Physics (*Usul-e Elm-e Fizik*), The Principle of the Science of Chemistry (*Usul-e Elm-e Shimi*), Biology and General and Individual Psychology (*Biologi va Pesikologi-e Umumi va Khususi*), The Material and Logical Principles of Science (*Usul-e Madi va Manteqi Elm*), Theories of Science (*Teoriha-ye Elm*) Sleep and Dreaming (*Khab va Khabdidan*), Necessity and Freedom (*Jabr va Ekhtiyar*), Machinism, Art and Materialism (*Hunar va Materialism*), and Mysticism and Principles of Materialism (*Erfan va Usul madi*) (Chaqueri 1983, 5). Arani's attempt at an even further scientific interpretation of Marxism, his heroic defiance of Reza Shah's regime and his subsequent death in Reza Shah's prison all combined to make his impact on many generations of Iranian Marxists long-lasting.

In 1938 Arani personally defended The Fifty Three in the court and delivered a speech which contained some elements of his socio-political thought. In the defense Arani revealed the classical Marxist approach to "liberal" revolutions as the preparatory and necessary, but incomplete, stage in the liberation of the entire society,

The current constitution of Iran is the product of a bloody revolution for which thousands of Iranian youths in every corner sacrificed their blood to obtain a few articles of law. This revolution, in contrast to what is reputed, was not staged by foreigners but they used it. [However] this revolution is still incomplete and its product was, in so far as justice is concerned, incomplete because its principles were created from the intellectual influence of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau on French Law and which influenced the laws of other countries including those of Iran...It is obvious that, in so far as justice is concerned, Iran's constitution is still very incomplete and must be perfected in the same [revolutionary] manner in which it was [originally] achieved (Arani 1963,109-110).

What prompted Arani's idea of the expansion of citizenship rights was his attempt to ground the concept of rights in labor. In the same defense he stated,

Right, which is engendered as early as the appearance of man and his society, comprises of the entirety of the freedoms of one individual or a legal person. The right of the individual vis-a-vis other individuals creates the concept of duty. Real justice and right are comprised of the protection of those rights and duties which in proportion to the structure and natural and logical development of the individual and society must be accorded to them. The first and most essential of those rights is the right to life and freedom; i.e. the equal rights and duties of individuals relative to their share in the toil of production and consumption and the regulation of the process of production and consumption (Arani 1963, 109; emphasis added).

Then Arani argued that the prevalent laws in Iran were nothing but "fossilized" and "transparent" formulas enacted by the ruling classes and therefore devoid of justice. Since labor constitutes the primary grounding of right and since the majority of the people of Iran owe

their existence to their labor, his argument seems to imply that only the law which protected the interests of the mass could be considered legitimate (Arani 1963, 109).

It was no accident that Arani used the term mass (*tudeh*) instead of proletariat in the defense. Because of the anti-communist law of 1931, he and his cohorts avoided using well-known Marxist terminology explicitly. However, the concept of the mass used in this context reveals Arani's interest in a collective and undifferentiated subject. Arani's more philosophical essays also betray his penchant for a collective notion of subjectivity in which there is little space for the individual subject. In an article entitled "Art in New Iran", Arani argued against the autonomy of art and artists. He believed art was the mere reflection of social life and the artist merely "recognized" that instead of creating anything. In the style of socialist realism he commented that "The artist, in the last analysis, is a social product. His spirit and the spirit of his work are determined by the economic forces of his time" (Arani 1983, 54).

The determinism involved in the denial of individual subjectivity constitutes the link and the common denomination between Arani's quest for collective subjectivity and his thrust toward a further materialist/scientific interpretation of Marxism, which ever since has had a long-lasting impact on radical thought in Iran. Arani's epistemology, for example, considered "human sciences" a category subsumed under physical sciences which were in turn subsumed under "dialectical materialism". In the introduction to his physics book he wrote,

The chain of exact sciences is a continuous string, consisting of the general principles of sciences which begins with the most materialist and therefore most exact sciences, i.e., natural sciences (physics and chemistry). This chain[i.e., exact sciences] continues with the observation of the special material changes in the physical and psychological state of living beings (biology and psychology) and finally, within the same circle of sciences, discusses mankind and human sciences according to the principles of dialectical materialism (Agahi 1964, 20).

Arani's positivism, in conjunction with his labor fetishism, denied any possibility of creative thought. "It is only with the brain" he wrote in his essay "Mysticism and Principles of Materialism" that "we can think". The brain is the matter and thought is one of the effects of this matter. Experience proves that if material conditions such as light, temperature, humidity, etc., change, there would also be a change in the structure and functioning of the living being. The brain also follows the same principle. But, he added, society is also an external determinant of thought. Because society is the largest apparatus containing all of human communications and since communications are mediated by labor, thought is also determined by the externalized hard force of the matter and labor (Arani c1970, 3).

Arani believed that "dialectical materialism", embodying the "materialist" grounding of thought represented the "highest peak" of achievement in the history of human belief systems (Arani c1970, 4). He even attributed the emergence of the modern era entirely to "material" factors such as trade, industry, manufactures, etc. (Arani c1970, 45).

Arani's materialist discourse culminated in the negation of human subjectivity by denying free will. In a article entitled "Necessity and Free Will", he concluded that since "the soul and life are the determined effects of the special system of matter", therefore, "man's volition is not free and is dependent upon the external circumstances and conditions of his life" (Agahi 1964,23).

It is interesting to note that, just like Kasravi, Arani intended to "disabuse" the Iranian "masses" of their superstitions by disseminating his ideas of "dialectical materialism". Thus, in "Mysticism and Principles Materialism ", he wrote,

The goal of publishing this article is to raise the consciousness of the mass to the diseases of mendicancy [dervish], seclusion, contentment, opium, madness, apotheosis. [Our goal is] to encourage people toward material life and struggle for the preservation of life (Arani c1970, 4).

But, Arani's life abruptly came to a tragic end and the task of promulgating "dialectical materialism" had to be devolved to the next generation of Iranian Marxist-Leninists.

The Second Generation of Marxist-Leninist Thought and Modernity

Taqi Arani died in prison in 1940, apparently as a result of deliberate infection by typhus. However, the rest of the group of Fifty Three were released from prison after the forced abdication and exile of Reza Shah by the Allies in 1941. They founded a party organization called Tudeh --literally meaning mass-- which has ever since exercised an enormous impact on Iranian socio-political life. In the period of its legal and clandestine existence inside Iran between

1941 and 1953, however, the Tudeh Party's ideology cannot simply be described as Marxist-Leninist. Although the party closely followed the Soviet line, especially with regard to its foreign policy, the Tudeh's theoretical orientation and ideological make up, at least its public manifestation, was relatively more pragmatic and eclectic enough to fit the description of a typical Marxist-Leninist line.¹²

It was only after the Party's final disbanding and the exile of its leader and major theoreticians in 1953 that Tudeh's theoretical discourse reached a level of maturity to make a major impact on Iran's intellectual processes. The theoretical views of the party were mostly published in the new series *Donya* revived in 1960. Among the leading theoreticians who contributed to *Donya*, in the 60's and 70's, Ehsan Tabari, Abdul Hussein, Agahi and N. Qaziani were most prominent. Among these, the central role of Ehsan Tabari as the central philosopher of the party is indisputable.

Ehsan Tabari(1917-1989) was born in Sari in the northern province of Gilan in Iran into a upper-class landed family. He studied law at Tehran University, where he met Taqi Arani, and later studied in Britain and worked for the Anglo-Iranian oil company. As a junior member of the group of Fifty Three he was sentenced to three years of imprisonment in 1937. He soon assumed a prominent role in the leadership of the Tudeh Party and in 1948, after the Party faced trouble as a result of the fiasco of the separatist movement in Azarbeyjan and the Tudeh's involvement in it in 1948 which

¹²The complete history of the Tudeh Party has yet to be written. But Abrahamian's *Iran Between two Revolutions* remains a very good source of information on the history and impact of the Tudeh Party on the Iranian political scene.

resulted in the suppression of The Party by the state and internal dissent, he assumed the task of theoretical clarification and ideological indoctrination of the cadres which increasingly moved The Party in the direction of Marxist-Leninist thought. Tabari has been a prolific author and has produced numerous books and essays ranging from philosophy to Iranian history and culture.

It should be first noted that Tabari's discourse discussed here covers a long span of time and even more important that his discourse was subjected to all the turbulence caused by the aftermath of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, where Tabari was in exile and by consequent vacillations of the de-Stalinization period. However, one theme that underlies most of Tabari's abstract discussions is the theme of universal empowerment of the Iranian masses. In an article entitled "Marxism and Humanism", Tabari expressed the classical Marxist critique of modernity by paraphrasing Engels to the effect that,

As the bourgeois society was firmly established in the 19th century, it aroused a bitter [sense of] despair, because it was the caricature of those brilliant promises of the revolutionary "enlighteners". Instead of liberty, equality, fraternity and the promised elevation of human dignity, modern society and the exploitation in capitalist society led to the decline of human dignity and moral degeneracy. The anti-human nature of the bourgeoisie was ever forcefully revealed (Tabari 1964, 43).

Then, Tabari repeated classical Marxist formulas for the overcoming of the abstract nature of modern society. According to him, Marxism overcame the abstraction of humanism as it criticized Feuerbach and the "realist socialists" for their belief in the fixity of

human nature. Marxism, Tabari contended, demonstrated that human nature is historical and it is only through class struggle and the establishment of the ownership of the proletariat, elimination of exploitation and creation of collective ownership of the means of production that freedom, equality and fraternity could be made possible. Then he paraphrased Marx as stating that "It is only through the emancipation of labor from capital that the universal emancipation of man is possible. It is only within the freedom of the collectivity that the freedom of the individual may have any meaning..."(Tabari 1964, 46-7).¹³

In a different article but pertaining to the same larger context, Tabari broached the Marxian concept of alienation and commodity fetishism. In a classical Marxian approach he argued what has deprived the humans as such in the modern era is the alienation of labor power and its transformation into the control and domination of humans as "fetishism of commodities" (Tabari 1963, 90-91).

In his discourse Tabari resolved to restore this lost subjectivity to all. Extolling the virtues of human subjectivity in a grandiloquent language, he wrote,

In the battle of man with nature and with death, man is more powerful. Yea, man is the ultimate victor. Man may not unroot the 'hellish thorn' of death but he will enrich the dynamic substance of life so that death would appear but a mere pale shadow before it. History is replete with the

¹³In this article Tabari engaged in an ideological debate with the Chinese theoretician Chou Yang. The substance of the debate revolved around the issue of de-Stalinization and critique of the cult of personality discussed in the context of "bourgeois humanism" Vs "proletarian humanism". Tabari argued that "bourgeois humanism" should not be opposed to "proletarian humanism", but must be considered as its preliminary stage.

victories of many a Prometheus and a Sisyphus (Tabari c1977a, 384).

What seems to have engaged much of Tabari's attention in his theoretical discourse was the question of who the carrier of subjectivity should be--the individual or the collectivity? His wrestling with the issue appears in much of his theoretical writings. In an article entitled, "The Characteristics of the World and Our Era: A Perspective on the Most Important Issues", he wrote: "the freedom of individuals, the freedom of peoples (*khalq-ha*)--these two phases disclose the content of the momentous struggles of our eventful era" (Tabari c1977b, 405). He even advocated giving more free rein to the individual in the post-Stalinist era,

After the Stalinist period, what direction should socialist society face? Collective and scientific leadership in the government and the economy should replace bureaucratic organizational styles, personal methods, abstract [icon making] and scholastic illusions. Economic life should be organized in such a way that, while preserving the priority of the interest of the collectivity, the arena for the expression of initiative is not circumscribed and the flame of individual enthusiasm is not suppressed (Tabari c1977b, 410).

In a rare moment in the history of Iranian Marxist thought, Tabari recognized the individual as the carrier of subjectivity and expressed concern for the crushing of the individual subject under the "weight of the species" (Tabari c1977c, 440). He even attempted to reconcile the individual and the collectivity, a reconciliation which he relegated to some vague future socialist society,

The combination of independent individual life with the collective communal life is based on the voluntary consent of each individual. The power of collectivity should never crush individual personhood and the independence of the individual should never harm the order and discipline of collective coexistence. Finding the correct balance between these two opposite and dialectical poles is one of the most complicated problems whose solution is predicated upon the solution of a mass of other economic and social problems. Capitalism has never been able to solve this problem; it has created chaos or despotism, or both at the same time. Even socialism, despite its achievements, under pressure by capitalism and the present level of development of man, has been unable to solve this problem entirely (Tabari c1977c, 440).

Such a new approach by Tabari toward the recognition of the individual as at least a partial carrier of subjectivity necessitated also a new and revisionary attitude toward the conceptual framework of "dialectical materialism". Within the framework of a critique of capitalism, probably influenced by Lukacs, Tabari emphasized the process of capitalist reification. The "criminal" capitalist system, he argued, by imposing an unhealthy competition and the arms race has turned science and technology against humanity everywhere and in everyday life. After the liberation from capitalism, there would be no need for a hasty "reproduction" and transformation of nature. We can take hold of the "helm of the ship of scientific, technological and economic progress and navigate in a direction that would not lead to the domination of souls by objects. Rather the opposite [may take place]" (Tabari c1977c, 442-3). He even proposed a dynamic and "dialectical" relation between the "base" and "superstructure" which would result in the emancipation from necessity imposed by nature and society,

A Marxist observes in human history, just as in natural history, a progressive movement which stems from the particular laws of social structure. That is to say, it is not possible to find scientific and convincing reasons for this phenomenon only in the laws of biology and [physical] anthropology. The constant change in the forces and relations of productions, the transformation in the sphere of meaning in society--i.e., the political and ideological superstructure which originates in the base but in turn influences it-- creates a complicated dynamic mechanism in history which causes the progress of historical stages and socio-economic formations in the direction of man's increasing domination over material and social necessity [*jabr*] (Tabari 1975, 8).

This development allowed Tabari to reconsider, for example, the role of mystical thought in traditional Iranian culture and its impact on contemporary intellectual processes. Unlike Kasravi and Arani, he believed in an emancipatory element in the Iranian mystical tradition and thought that a distinction must be made between the poets of Hafez and Rumi type and the other "self-negating" and "corrupt" elements belonging to the same tradition (Tabari 1961, 78).

Seemingly influenced by French existential thought, Tabari departed farthest from the materialism of the "dialectical materialism" of other Iranian Marxists. In the essay, "Man and Death", he wrote,

Between human life and a world which creates our understanding, reason and passions on the one hand, and the mute world of elements and their chemical interactions on the other, there is no qualitative resemblance. Haphazard turning of elements is quite different from the network of emotional interactions. Man is let loose in the desert of existence to realize his essence by transforming

the strange and alien world into a pleasant home (Tabari c1977, 384).

Tabari's relative departure from orthodox positions becomes even more apparent when his views are compared to some of his colleagues and contemporaries. Abdulhussein Agahi, for example, published his articles next to Tabari's in *Donya*, attempting to demonstrate the priority of matter and structure by frequently quoting the "eternal words" of Lenin.¹⁴

However, Tabari was unable to extirpate himself completely from the tenets of Marxism and Marxism-Leninism. As a good Marxist he firmly believed in collective ownership and the proletariat as the collective subject of history. On numerous occasions he emphasized the priority of the collectivity over the individual subject.¹⁵ This frame of mind is eloquently captured in a flowery passage where Tabari surrendered the individual to the universal, in this case, the "ocean" of history, to redeem our individual mortality,

We can correctly assume the content of human life to consist of thinking, striving and struggling in the direction of progress in universal human history. In this process, we gradually attain a kind of eternal existence, a kind of a great victory because if it is true that I am a sound in the thunder of history, a leaf of its forest, a drop in its ocean and a ray of its sun, then my existence, my suffering, my struggle is not futile...if death is absolute annihilation in

¹⁴See, for example, Agahi's articles in various issues of *Donya* in the early 1960s. The translation of some his articles might shed some light on his theoretical disposition: "Some of Dialectical and Material Elements in the Thoughts of Abdulrazaq Lahigi, Author of Guhar-e Murad", or "A Critique of the Critique of the Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism", etc.

¹⁵When Tabari attempted a reconciliation between the individual subject and the collectivity he delegated the task to some distant future utopian socialist society. See for example his essay *Shahr Khorshid* or "The City of Sun" (Tabari c1977c).

regard to our particular individual existence, it is only relative in regard to our collective existence. Here the absolute is the progressive movement of history (Tabari c1977a, 389).

The 1960s and '70s were a period of relative sophistication for Iranian radical discourse, without much achievement in the practical sphere. Thus, while the theorists of the Tudeh Party were engaged in these relatively abstract discussions from abroad, the "New" Left inside Iran in the form of "Marxist-Leninist" guerrilla fighters called for action in the 1970's.

The Marxist Guerrilla Movement: Praxis and Subjectivity

After the CIA sponsored coup of 1953, which toppled the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mossadeq and installed Reza Shah, until 1963 there was a period of increasing consolidation of the Pahlavi regime and American domination in Iran-- intermingled with some sporadic activities by the opposition. However, after 1963, especially the summer uprising of the same year by supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini and its bloody suppression, the Shah's regime tried to extend the clutches of the state into every corner of the civil society. The "rentier" state of Mohammad Reza Shah relying on the increasing oil revenues and receiving geo-political support from the United States in the 1960's and '70's banned any political expression and severely curtailed political participation by all classes and groups in society.¹⁶ The repression by the regime of the possibility of any oppositional

¹⁶On the concept of "rentier state" in Iran see Skocpol 1982.

political activity as well as the conservatism and inaction of the Tudeh Party in this period prompted a group of young Iranian radicals to start a guerrilla movement whose spirit can be captured in one word--praxis.¹⁷

Ironically, the Marxist guerrilla movement which downplayed the importance of theory had developed its own theory of praxis.¹⁸ The two central figures who were responsible for the development of the movement's theoretical positions were Bizhan Jazani (1937-1975) and Mas'ud Ahmadzadeh (d1971). Jazani was born in Tehran and was involved in political activity since age ten and was imprisoned as a member of the Tudeh Party in the 1950's. He studied philosophy at the University of Tehran and graduated in 1963. He was one of the founders of the organization of The Iranian Peoples Guerrilla Freedom Fighters (Sazaman-e Cherikha-ye Fedai Khalq-e Iran) or more briefly known as The Fedais. He was captured by the SAVAK in 1968 and kept in prison until 1975 when he was shot to death, allegedly while attempting to escape (Zabih 1986, 118-19; Abrahamian 1982, 483-4). Ahmadzadeh was born in Mashad and while studying there until high school, he engaged in political activities in the National Front, the political organization associated with Mossadeq. He seems to have held strong religious views during these years, but after entering college in Tehran in 1967, majoring

¹⁷Starting in February 1971, theory became praxis when a group of 13 young men armed with light weapons attacked the Siahkal Gendarmerie station in the forested mountains near the Caspian Sea and sparked eight years of guerrilla warfare against the regime in which a total of 341 fighters, mostly belonging to Marxist groups, lost their lives. See Abrahamian 1982, 480-81.

¹⁸Here I will discuss only the Marxist guerrilla movement and not the Islamic groups partly because of space considerations and partly because of the proximity of their discourse to that of Ali Shariati whom I will discuss in the next chapter.

in mathematics, he was exposed to Marxism-Leninism and established a secret circle devoted to the discussion of the works of Che Guevara, Regis Debray and the theories of urban guerrilla warfare by the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella. His essay entitled "Armed Struggle: A Strategy as Well as a Tactic", constitutes one of the most important "theoretical" works of the Marxist guerrilla movement. Ahmadzadeh was captured in 1971 but exhibited exceptional courage in the face of savage torture. As a result he was executed a few months after his arrest.

Assessing the "objective" conditions for the launching of a revolutionary working class movement, Ahmadzadeh expressed regret that unlike Lenin's time in Russia where revolutionary intellectuals could establish spontaneous connections with the workers, and therefore organize a revolutionary movement, the state of extreme political repression in Iran did not allow such conditions. In fact, he argued, the harshness of the police state had deprived workers of even trade union consciousness, let alone the political consciousness necessary for revolutionary action (Ahmadzadeh 1978,31-35). On the other hand, both Ahmadzadeh and Jazani argued, the conservatism, conformism and inaction of the leadership of the Tudeh Party had resulted in nothing but the slaughter of the devoted and sincere members of the Party (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 12; Jazani 1976, 39).

To remedy the inertia created in the "masses" by these two factors, Jazani and Ahmadzadeh proposed praxis (*pratik*) as the motor of the revolutionary movement they were determined to start.

Jazani described praxis in terms of the priority of action in the formation of theory,

In our relatively young and inexperienced movement, it is wrong to expect to be, in theory and practice, without mistakes. It is even worse for us to be afflicted with dogmatism regarding our projections and plans. For us, not fearing action, not fearing committing possible errors and attempting to overthrow the present conditions with sincerity and courage, will provide the means of arriving at perfectly correct tactics. In fact it is only through praxis (*pratik*) that our theories are developed and corrected. Spinning our wheels in the theoretical phase, fear from action and sinking in mere [discussion of] strategic issues would only lead us to opportunistic conservatism (Jazani 1976, 4-5).

Both Jazani and Ahmadzadeh stressed the downplaying of theoretical issues in their task of building a revolutionary movement. Quoting Mao, Jazani stated that it was only by participating in revolution and immediate experience that revolutionary knowledge and method may be achieved. He also observed that the goal of all political-military movements has been to battle against the people's enemies, not to increase the political consciousness of the members--a fact which demonstrates the "undeniable superiority of praxis over theory". Drawing on the theories of Regis Debray, Ahmadzadeh emphasized the importance of praxis. Extrapolating Debray's theories to the Iranian context, he proclaimed that in Iran as in Latin America, being a revolutionary was not defined by formal membership in a party but by action (Ahmadzadeh 1978,49). Ahmadzadeh also de-emphasized the role of theory to stress the importance of praxis. According to him, unlike the 19th century when grand theorists such as Marx were needed to respond to the

theoretical needs of the movement, today there is no such need. Since the content of the revolution has been clarified and a general method for action has been achieved, therefore the formulation of a particular theory of revolution depends on revolutionary action rather than theory (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 89).

What constituted the core of praxis for both Jazani and Ahmadzadeh was armed struggle and military action against imperialism and its domestic lackeys. Ahmadzadeh exhorted the communist movement to replace "the weapon of critique" with the "critique of the weapon" (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 81). Even an existing party, if indeed not harmful for the movement, was not in his analysis necessary since in the process of armed struggle a political organ to carry out tasks of revolutionary leadership would be created (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 55). The most important merit of the military action according to this analysis was that while it exposed the myth of the omnipotence of the state, it also reversed the inertia of the "masses". Paraphrasing Debray, Ahmadzadeh contended that by action "we should demonstrate that the stability and security of [the regime] is but a deception" (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 40). Thus, the theorists of guerrilla movement argued that the regime and its imperialist supporters created a false impression of invincibility which could be shattered by military action revealing the vulnerability of the regime and encouraging the repressed "masses" to join the movement. Jazani assigned the role of sparking of such consciousness among the people to a guerrilla movement which by its heroic acts would assume the mantle of vanguardism abandoned by the old Communist Parties (Jazani 1976, 7).

The goal of the praxis advocated by the guerrilla movement was undoubtedly the empowerment of the "masses". In connection with this question Jazani wrote, "one of the most important issues facing the militant movements and individuals as well as the armed movement in general, is the problem of transition of the armed struggle from the levels confined to the vanguard, to the level of the masses" (Jazani 1976, 6). Ahmadzadeh only seconded Jazani by suggesting that the empowerment of the masses, which was the only means of bringing about social change, was only possible by raising their consciousness which in turn necessitated ultimately the spread of military-action orientation among the masses (Jazani 1976, 41).

These "conceptual" positions required a shifting tendency in some of the ontological assumptions found in classical Marxist theory. As we saw in chapter two classical Marxist theory grounded subjectivity and therefore emancipation in human labor. The theorists of the Marxist guerrilla movement in Iran, following their French and Latin American mentors, without completely abandoning the economic "base", were in the process of developing a tendency to shift from labor to action and especially military action as the basis of subjectivity and therefore emancipation. While still maintaining his loyalty to the economic "base" Jazani wrote,

As ignoring economic conditions, disregarding attachments of the masses to the economy and resorting to empty propaganda is deviation from "Marxism", so undoubtedly separating "Marxism" from its revolutionary characteristic and mass revolutionary fervor is also an unforgivable deviation (Jazani 1978a, 8).

This position prompted Jazani to declare that, "what caused the appearance of protest movements [in Iran] in the years following the [second world] war (1942-1946) was not the change in the productive relations of society but the transformation in the superstructure and the subjective conditions" (Jazani 1978b,17). Ahmadzadeh went even further by declaring that

in the process of revolutionary struggle, the economic struggle is increasingly losing its significance. This is the result of the increasing victory of politics over economy. It is the result of the domination of the class enemy with the most repressive equipment under the conditions of suffocation and terror. It is the result of the domination of global imperialism and the fact that this global domination is experiencing the process of its expiration (Ahmadzadeh 1978, 52).

It is remarkable that in the process of transforming the grounding of Marxist subjectivity, the "theorists" of the guerrilla movement again reduced subjectivity to one-dimensionality--this time to military action. Assuming that military action could lead to subjectivity and therefore emancipation, they also, like their "old" Marxist predecessors, sought liberation in the collectivity of the "masses". Cognizant of the potential of "misinterpretation" of military action as the "petit bourgeois" tendency toward individual action and individual glorification, the theorists of the guerrilla movement in Iran once again sacrificed the individual subject to the collectivity. Reflecting the fear of the "cult of personality", Jazani warned against hero-worship potential in the acts of the individual guerrilla fighter. But at the same time he again identified emancipation with the amorphous and undifferentiated "masses" in the collectivity,

This is not an individual struggle so that a "hero" may change the course and history by 'derring-do' and thereby emancipate the people. The armed movement is the starter of a mass movement. The Leninist principle that, "without workers all bombs are potentially powerless" has been accepted by the armed movement without any qualification. For this reason, the armed movement's sole goal in [pursuing] military action has been the mobilization of masses. The ultimate value of the armed struggle lies in the ability to direct the masses in the battle against the regime (Jazani 1976, 34).

It is noteworthy, however, that with all his purported sophistication in dialectical methodology, Jazani failed to realize the dialectical relationship between conceptualizing the people and citizens as the "masses" and the creation of the "cult of personality", which he had tried to avert.

Jazani returned to the materialism of "old" Marxist-Leninism by denying the principle of subjectivity implicit in his critique of the link between individual subjectivity and what he construed as "idealism". In an article entitled, "Social Psychology", he attributed subjectivity and the "mind" only to the individual,

In principle, if by psychology is meant the study of the impacts of objects on the subject or on the conditions and activities of the mind, it should be noted that the society and collectivity neither possess subjectivity [zehn] nor mind[ravan]. These phenomena, whether in their idealistic or scientific definitions, belong to the individual (Jazani 1978c, 4).

But since such a psychology was at odds with his ideal as collectivity he denounced them as "bourgeois" and sought to derive consciousness and "self-motivation" from the collectivity, while

reducing psychology to its biological and physiological aspects (Jazani 1978c, 4).

While the development of "revolutionary" Marxism reached its highest point in the praxis-dominated guerrilla movement of the 1970s and has had an enormous impact on the socio-political discourse in Iran, the phenomenon known as the "Third Force" (*Niru-ye Sevum*), adopted a different path.

The Third Force

In order to examine the important discourse generated by the movement known as the "Third Force" we have to backtrack chronologically to the late 1940's. In the aftermath of the failure of a secessionist movement in Azarbajejan led by the Democratic Party of Azarbajejan in 1947, the latent crisis in the Tudeh Party came to a head. The many reasons for the crisis in the Tudeh Party are beyond the scope of this chapter, but as we will see shortly, theoretical debates played a major part in it. In 1947, a group of dissenters splintered from the Tudeh Party. Among these there was Khalil Maleki, one of the original members of the Fifty Three who had been imprisoned with Taqi Arani by Reza Shah. After a few years Khalil Maleki joined Dr. Mozafar Baqai to create the Toilers Party. The party's program called for the establishment of a genuine constitutional government and social and economic reforms as well as steering away from "all forms of imperialism, including Russian imperialism" (Abrahamian 1982, 256). The Party's youth newspaper was called *Niru-ye Sevum* or The Third Force which was popular especially among college students in Tehran (Abrahamian 1982,

256). But during the oil nationalization of the early 1950's led by Mossadeq, Dr. Baqai withdrew his support for Mossadeq. As a result Maleki broke away from the Toilers Party too and formed his own organization named after his newspaper, The Third Force. Constituting the left wing of the coalition formed for the nationalization of oil, the National Front led by Mossadeq, the Third Force espoused the cause of a "social democratic revolution" which would bring about extensive reforms such as distribution of land and voting rights for women (Abrahamian 1982, 277). While the Third Force fought against internal despotism and its Western backers, it also denounced Soviet imperialism and their dogmatic and blind followers in the Tudeh Party. The discourse generated by the Third Force had some important influence on the socio-political thought in Iran, and its evolution contributed to the emergence of the all-important theme of the "Return-to-the-Self", as I will examine it in the next section.

The central figure in the Third Force was Khalil Maleki(1901-1969). Maleki was born into in a religious merchant's family from Tabriz. His father was an active in the Constitutional Revolution. Maleki received his primary and secondary education in Arak in the Azarbeyjan province of Iran and continued his education at the German technical school in Tehran(Katouzian 1983, 22) In 1928 he went to Germany to study chemistry on a state scholarship. But soon, as a result of his probing into the suspicious suicide of an Iranian student, he came into conflict with the officials of the Iranian embassy in Berlin who branded him a communist, and he lost his stipend. Consequently, Maleki had to return to Iran without

finishing his Ph.D. dissertation (Katouzian 1983, 28). After returning to Iran, he registered at the Teachers Training College in Tehran and became a teacher. While Maleki was in Germany he had established some contact with some of the radical Iranian student circles, but it was after his return to Iran that he was gradually recruited to the radical intellectual circle of the Fifty Three founded by Taqi Arani and was imprisoned with them in 1937. After the remaining members of the Fifty Three were released from prison in 1941 and formed the Tudeh Party, they also recruited Maleki. While Maleki was very active in the Tudeh Party and held sensitive positions, he was critical of the predominant Stalinist ideology in the Party and opposed the subservience of the leaders of the Tudeh toward the Soviet Union. This opposition and criticism led to Maleki's separation from the Party and eventually to the establishment of the Third Force.

Maleki's most vehement criticism of the Tudeh Party was directed at the party's "necessitarianism" as a latter-day fatalism. He took the party's leadership to task for believing in an "automatic view of history", in their conceptualization of historical materialism (Katouzian 1983,63). In his criticism of the Tudeh Party's determinism which was one of the causes of his splinter, Maleki distinguished his path from the Tudeh Party, while striving for the same goal of socialism,

In our opinion party and social commitments must be based on discernment, intelligence, and correct understanding and analysis of events, especially the realization that our [human] intervention has an impact and as a social force makes a difference in the process of events. The process of historical necessity is created by us, not by esoteric celestial

or terrestrial forces...This is the [essence] of two paths to the same goal and as the result of the collision of these two paths, unfortunately, the current schism[i.e., the split between Maleki and the Tudeh Party] takes place (Katouzian 1983, 64).

Maleki maintained his belief in a "genuine" Marxian notion of "scientific historical necessity" while he accused the leadership of the Tudeh Party of believing in the "absolute historical necessity" which in his opinion accounted for the Tudeh Party's passivity and in action vis-a-vis the international events, and following the Soviet line submissively (Maleki 1995, 78-9). What he meant by a "scientific historical necessity" was a belief in a limited sense of human agency in the process of history, where the "hero" and the "genius" in history without making and initiating history, do make an impact on it (Maleki 1995, 73). He even criticized Hegel, or an interpretation of him, for ignoring the role of the individual in the making of history as a result of their powerlessness vis-a-vis the *zeitgeist* (Maleki 1995, 70-72). Maleki's emphasis on the individual subject was one of the causes of the mutual disfavor between him and the Tudeh Party. In fact while he was still a Tudeh member one of his articles was censored by the party for broaching the role of the individual in history (Maleki 1983, 289). That Maleki criticized the surrendering of individual subjectivity to the collectively is demonstrated by his assessment of an incident involving a member of the Soviet Communist Party of Iranian origins named Dadashzadeh whom he met in prison in Iran. Maleki described Dadashzadeh as a "generic type of a non-entity" in relation to the collectivity and the Party,

He is a weak individual in relation to the large society and [even] the larger party. His individual reason, intelligence and understanding vis-a-vis the public opinion is naught. In brief, Dadashzadeh spoke of public opinion in the same manner as a devotee speaks of his master or a Dervish who is *fanafillah* [annihilated in God] of his god (Maleki 1983, 322).

Such view of individual subjectivity prompted Maleki to decry the lack of individual freedom in the Soviet system. While he was critical of the capitalist system he was even more critical of the Soviet system for denying economic and political freedoms and destroying individual freedom (Maleki 1983, 186).¹⁹ This did not mean, however, that Maleki would neglect the principle of universality. His concern with universal subjectivity is encapsulated in his aphorism that, "every baker should be able to learn the art of governing and participation in government" (Maleki 1995 230).

As a socialist, Maleki criticized the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909 for the incompleteness of its universality (Maleki 1995, 85). For this reason he proposed that the democratic movement in Iran take up the task of creating a society in which universal subjectivity in all its depth and breadth could develop,

In my opinion the most important historical task of the National Front is the creation of a "mass civil order" [*madaniyat- e tudeh-i*], so that every individual [member] of the nation could have a place there and according to his/her merit and talent would contribute to society and would enjoy the fruits of his/her toil. We can identify a society and a civilization in which there would be a logical and proper combination of the individual and society, a civilization in which society is not sacrificed to the

¹⁹Maleki specifically targeted "Democratic Centralism" as a farce in which there was no democracy and centralism was unlimited. See Maleki 1995, 132.

individual and also remember that society does not exist in itself but rather is made up of all individuals (Maleki 1995, 230).

To present a balanced view of Maleki's discourse, it is necessary to mention, as Darush Ashuri has pointed out, that while he bravely fought against Stalinism and Sovietism, his intellectual relations with Leninism remained ambivalent (Ashuri 1991, 52). Even more importantly, it might be added, he remained loyal to most tenets of Marxism neglecting Marxism's unwavering pursuit of a collective subject. However, the most important aspect of Maleki's discourse was its consequences. It helped to set the stage for the emergence of the theme of the return-to-the-self, which proved to change the destiny of Iran. Near the end of his career, by attempting to steer away from both capitalist imperialism and Communist domination, Maleki arrived at a position which called for the adoption of an ideology designed specifically for the particular needs and circumstances of Iran. Maleki expressly called for the creation of a "social school" [*maktab-e ejtema'i*] based in the specific historical and cultural experience of Iran. He even recommended Islam as the source of social justice for that ideology, thus initiating the call for "authenticity" (Maleki 1995, 218-224).

Return-To-The-Self

Without doubt Jalal Al Ahmad (1928-1969) was the central figure in this pivotal turning point in the intellectual life of the Iranian nation and its history. As a friend and colleague of Maleki, Al Ahmad was a crucial link in the development of the theme of return-

to-the-self initiated by Maleki. Their close relationship went back to their membership in the Tudeh Party and their from the Party at the same time in 1948 as well as the creation of The Third Force a few years later. After the establishment of the theocratic regime in Iran, Al Ahmad has been blamed for Iran's retreat from modernity, but as I will try to analyze below the picture is more complicated.

Al Ahmad was born into an esteemed religious family and grew up during the period of downplay of religion under Reza Shah. Both his grandfather and father were locally well-respected and prominent clerics and he himself donned the clerical robe until his early 20's (Dabashi 1993, 42). In 1943, he went to the seminary at Najaf in Iraq, one of the most prominent Shii centers for the study of theology, but returned to Iran after a few months to join the newly established Tudeh Party. In 1948 Al Ahmad joined the separatists from the Party led by Khalil Maleki, but made known that he was no mere follower of Maleki's group and parted from Tudeh on his own terms (Dabashi 1993, 48). However, in 1951 Al Ahmad joined Baqai and Maleki in establishing the Toilers Party and after the split between Baqai and Maleki in 1953, joined the latter to organize the Third Force.

As Hamid Dabashi has argued, after splitting from the Tudeh Party, Al Ahmad's political activity could not be confined to mere party politics and one particular party. As a result he expended his considerable talents in many different fields ranging from fiction writing to ethnography, writing social and political essays, literary criticism, translation and journalism (Dabashi 1993, 49-63). Al Ahmad's achievements in literature are reflected in the

developments of his unique prose style. As Dabashi has described it, Al Ahmad's fast and often verbless sentences resemble telegraphic texts, wasting no time in getting to the point. This style of writing, combined with the extensive utilization of folklore and everyday speech was probably intended to reach the largest segments of the social universal.²⁰

Al Ahmad might be considered as one of the earliest generation of "post-colonial" thinkers who were increasingly paying attention to cultural issues in the confrontation between the imperialist West and the responses from the East. It is true that in the process of the effort to create an Iranian identity as an Easterner to deter the effects of Western cultural imperialism in eroding the Iranian identity as such, Al Ahmad increasingly gravitated toward an Islamic matrix of symbolism. But his significant usage of religious symbolism and efforts against Western imperialism did not, in the final analysis, I believe, lead him to an anti-modern camp, even though at times he seems to fall into that trap.

Gharbzadegi was the central concept in Al Ahmad's socio-political discourse. The title of a most influential book in the recent history of Iran as it appeared in 1962, *gharbzadegi* has been translated by different neologisms into English. Literally meaning "West-struckness," it has been variously translated as "Occidentosis", "Westmania" and "Westoxication". In reality the term *gharbzadegi* had been first coined by Fardid, an Iranian philosopher who apparently had studied with Heidegger and seems to have taken

²⁰See Dabashi (1993) for a detail biography in English and analysis of Al Ahmad's works.

upon himself the task of introducing and propagating Heidegger's anti-modern philosophy into the intellectual circles in Iran in the 1960s, '70s and even the '80s. Fardid had coined the Greek neologism *dysiplexia* as the basis for *gharbzadegi* to denote the anti-modern constructs of Heidegger.²¹ But Al Ahmad's take on *gharbzadegi* was quite different.²² Al Ahmad himself defined *gharbzadegi* as,

The aggregate of symptoms afflicting the life, culture, civilization and mode of thought of a people having no tradition functioning as a fulcrum, no continuity in history, no gradient of [social] transformation, but having only what the machine brings them...Thus *gharbzadegi* is the characteristic of a period of our history when we have not yet conquered the machine and do not understand the secrets of its configuration and structure (al Ahmad 1977, 34-35).

²¹Ali Gheissari has provided a very informative account of Fardid's original conceptualization of "*dysiplexia*" and its Farsi translation *gharbzadegi* which deserves full quotation. Gheissari has related, "In a private interview on the genesis of the term with Professor Fardid, he predictably gave a more philosophical, yet no less obscure, explanation. The term, he contended, was made into Persian while having in mind the spirit of a Greek combined expression *dysiplexia*, a term which was also created by Fardid himself. *Dysis*, in Greek, means the West; and *plexia* means to be hit or afflicted by something(as in, for example, "apoplexy"). The West or *dysis* in Greek (similar to the Arabic *gharb*) is both geographical West as well as the place where the sun sets and darkness begins. Here Fardid's main reproach is not to Western technology(or the *machine*, according to Al-Ahmad) but to the very structure of the so-called egocentric *weltanschauung* of occidental epistemology, as originated in ancient Greece, which regards an existential separation between man as the knowing subject and the external world as the object of study. Accordingly the emergence of such a perspective, as opposed to the harmonious and illuminative qualities of the oriental philosophies, was nothing but the beginning of a universal period of darkness which has since concealed the original unity and totality of Being(Gheissari 1989, 264-5).

²²In Darush Ashuri's estimation, Al Ahmad was much more influenced by Sartre--even though he did not seem to have read his *Being and Nothingness*--rather than by Heidegger through Fardid. Ashuri also suggests that Al Ahmad misunderstood Fardid's Heideggerian sense of *gharbzadegi* (Ashuri 1985, 257-8).

This characterization, especially the first part, can easily be misinterpreted as a critique of modernity with the implication of a simple return to the pre-modern Iranian identity heavily overlaid with religion and fanaticism as a remedy. Indeed, Al Ahmad himself aided this misinterpretation by fulminating against the figures of the 19th and early 20th century Iranian enlightenment, without understanding the dialectical nature of the latter and praising reactionaries such as Nuri (Al Ahmad 1977, 78-80). At any rate, this has been the common reading of Al Ahmad's work, especially after the revolution of 1979, which has blamed the consequences of that revolution, to a large extent, on him.

However, a closer examination of Al Ahmad's writings, I believe, yields different results. In many passages in the book Gharbzadegi Al Ahmad described the concept of gharbzadegi as the process of the creation of an "empty self". Borrowing the term "facelessness" (*bissimayi*) from Khalil Maleki, he characterized the Iranian youth as a "faceless crowd who have lost their religious anchors without gaining any sensibility of self-hood" (Al Ahmad 1977, 106). Al Ahmad used more metaphors to describe the personality devoid of subjectivity and the process of the destruction of Iranian subject. He faulted the Iranian educational system for the creation of *gharbzadeh* people who are just like "faces on water" (*naqsh bar ab*). He also explained the concept of gharbzadegi in terms of "suspension" and "being on the fence". He criticized the members of the ruling elite for having their "feet on the air", for being just like a "particle suspended in the air" or a ""mote on water" who have been disconnected from the depth of their society, culture and tradition. Such a person is not,

"the connecting point between the ancient and modern, between old and new". He is "a thing without any connection with past and without any understanding of the future. He is not a point on the line, but a hypothetical point on a plane or even in the space, just like that suspended particle" (Al Ahmad 1977,141) He complained about the insouciance of gharbzadeh people who have no beliefs, nor any commitments. They do not believe in God but they are not even atheists. They sometimes go to the mosque as they go to movies or clubs. But they are everywhere mere onlookers, always sitting on the fence (Al Ahmad 1977,144). Most importantly, Al Ahmad defined the gharbzadeh person in terms of "inauthenticity" devoid of personality and subjectivity,

The gharbzadeh does not have a personality. He is an inauthentic [*bi-esalat*] thing. His self, his house, and his words smack of nothing. He is more representative of everything and everybody. Not that he is cosmopolitan, that he is internationalist. By no means. He belongs to nowhere rather than being cosmopolitan. [He] is an amalgam of a personalityless individuality and a personality devoid of character [*enferad bi-shakhsiyat va shakhsiyat khali az khasiseh*] (Al Ahmad 1977,146).

Al Ahmad maintained that the process of the creation of the "empty Iranian self" was perpetuated by the West and its domestic lackey, the Pahlavi regime. In the long rivalry between the East and the West, "we have ended up becoming the sweeper of the circus ring" and the West has become "the ringmaster". "And what a circus!" he wrote, "A circus of pornography, stultification and arrogance in order to freeloading [our] oil." Al Ahmad further argued that the process of creating empty selves in Iran was achieved

through the technological domination of Iran by the West and their domestic henchmen,

It is true that, as Marx said, we still have two worlds in struggle against one another. But these two worlds have acquired much vaster dimensions since his time and the struggle is much more complicated than the struggle between capital and labor...Our time is characterized by the worlds: one involved in the making, development and exportation of the machine, the other engaged in the consumption, depreciation and importation of the machine (Al Ahmad 1977,26-27).

Thus, in order to fight against this unholy alliance between reification and imperialism, Al Ahmad exhorted not to succumb to Western technological domination and put the "jinni of machine" back into its bottle and liberate ourselves by making the machine ourselves and gaining control over it (Al Ahmad 1977,118).²³

In order to fill the empty self and restore authenticity to it, Al Ahmad proposed what he called "*rushanfekri*". His ideas on this issue were mostly discussed in a book called On The Services and Treasons of Intellectuals , on which he started working after the, mostly religiously inspired uprising of the summer of 1963, which was bloodily suppressed by the Shah's regime. That Al Ahmad held the secular intellectuals responsible for the failure of this uprising,

²³ Al Ahmad's basically sound analysis of the alliance between reification and imperialism did not prevent him from making ludicrous pronouncements betraying a paranoid conspiratorial view of history. He suggested, for example, that the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 19096 was a plot by the British to wrest an oil concession from Iran(Al Ahmad 1977, 83). Similarly ludicrous were his suggestions that Timurlane's destruction of the Islamic East was as a result of European instigation(Al Ahmad 1977, 67-80). On the other hand, he discussed the phenomenon of Orientalism some two decades before Said did. See Al Ahmad 1977, 151.

was the occasion for him to discuss the role of intellectuals in addressing Iran's socio-political problems. What Al Ahmad meant by *rushanfekri*, it seems to me, was the exact opposite of *gharbzadegi* and its antidote. The term "*rushanfekri*" is of a relatively recent coinage in Iran. It is a Perso-Arabic term composed of "*rushan*", meaning "enlighten" and "*fekr*", meaning "thought". Rushanfekr in modern Persian is roughly equivalent to intellectual, but *rushanfekri*, at least in the context used by Al Ahmad, may be translated as "enlightenment" and *rushanfekr* as a member of the intelligentsia. In fact, he gave a definition of what he meant by *rushanfekri* which is almost a textbook definition of Western Enlightenment,

We can say that *rushanfekri* is peculiar to the period in which human societies are no longer organized on the basis of blind obedience [*ta'abud*] or fear of the supernatural...as before. A period in which the transformation in thought following the principle of experiment and progress in technology spreading among increasingly vaster human societies, with the aid of means of communication, has taken out the element of fear in natural phenomena and demonstrated that they have no influence on human destiny. In more general terms, *rushanfekri* is a period in which man is cut off from natural elements; [he] is left alone and his destiny is separated from that of nature. [He] finds himself alone vis-a-vis his destiny, without any Celestial or Terrestrial support. [He] is forced to act relying on himself only, without any expectations from the Outside or the Sublime world. [He is forced] to choose, to be free, and responsible (Al Ahmad 1980, 30-31).

He then concluded that when humans are liberated from "necessitarianism" (*jabr*) and take their own destiny in their hands, then they have entered the "circle of *rushanfekri*".

What Al Ahmad considered to constitute the substance of *rushanfekri* was freedom and free thinking (Al Ahmad 1980, 431). He also wrote that the "foundation of *rushanfekri* lies in the dissemination of free-thinking and the freedom to ask questions" (Al Ahmad 1980, 243). This position put him at odds with dogmatic religionists (*mutshari''*) since he excluded them from being *rushanfekrs* because they, just like the military personnel, only obey the Command [*Amr.*] In fact Al Ahmad presented a fascinating comparative ontology of different religious traditions regarding the relationship between God and humans. He contended that in Islam the relation between humans and God is that of master and slaves. In Judaism it is the relations between two rivals as exemplified in the story of the wrestling between Jacob and Jehovah. In Christianity, he argued, this relation is that of father and son and in Buddhism the unity of the creator and the created. Then he concluded that this relation of master and slave was one of the causes of the weakness of *rushanfekri* in the Islamic world (Al Ahmad 1980, 34).

Al Ahmad expressed some of his deepest ontological thought regarding the subjectivity of the individual in an essay which is an intimate analysis of his own existential problem of being infertile. Using the Persian metaphor that every child is a gravestone for his father, Al Ahmad "celebrated" his infertility, perhaps out of frustration, as signifying his radical freedom as an individual. In the essay "Sangi Bar Guri" (A stone on a Grave), written in 1963 but not published until 1981, he interpreted his inability to connect his ancestors to his progeny as a break in the continuity of tradition,

guaranteeing his individual freedom. Regarding his infertility as the negation of the past and tradition, he characterized the past and tradition as Nothing (*Hich*). And all this was salutary because they proved there was freedom for the individual,

If you knew how happy I am that I am the last gravestone for my dead [ancestors]. [I] am the one and the only ending point of Tradition. [I] am the negation of future which would have been imprisoned by past.... At least I am left with the consolation that in this world there is freedom for the sole individual (Al Ahmad 1981, 92-93).

Such a radical view of individual subjectivity, however, did not deter Al Ahmad from advocating the dissemination of *rushanfekri* among the Iranian people as a large part of his discourse concentrated on this issue. In fact it was with regards to the types of agents involved in this process of dissemination of *rushanfekri* and the utilization of the Islamic symbolism entrenched in the popular sentiments in the same process, which was responsible for contradictory and controversial positions in Al Ahmad's discourse. Like many of his predecessors, Al Ahmad contended that the extent of universalization and empowerment of people issuing from the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was confined to the aristocracy (Al Ahmad 1980, 202-5; 402). He also faulted the Tudeh party for its inability to reach deep into the social universal and its failure to disseminate *rushanfekri* among the "masses", despite its promising beginnings (Al Ahmad 1980, 415).

Al Ahmad's frustration with the failure of secular movements in disseminating *rushanfekri*, as he called the universalization of empowerment, issued in a series of related aporias in his discourse

which he never managed to resolve completely. He maintained that secular ideologies could not penetrate the depth of the social universal as has been proven time and again in Iranian history. To illustrate his point, he went back as far as the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. and the success of Zoroaster's religious message and the failure of the secular reformist Geumat, who probably lived two centuries after Zoroaster (Al Ahmad 1980, 152-8). But ironically, at the same time, he found religion to be the biggest obstacle in the dissemination of *rushanfekri*. Al Ahmad criticized the Shii concept *intizar* or the expectation of justice at the time of the advent of the promised Imam. One of the problems with this concept, he wrote, was that it was based on

ignoring the present reality and living only by hope of that Day or relegating the solution of all problems to that Advent. Don't you think this is the greatest cause of necessitarianism[*qaza va qadar*]? This gives rise to negligence in acting and decision making, and procrastination which is the biggest obstacle in the achievement and dissemination of *rushanfekri* (Al Ahmad 1980, 271; appendix S).

Al Ahmad attempted to resolve this aporia in a very cursory fashion by invoking the Shii principle of *Ejtehad*, which has historically been the method of deriving secondary rules from the revealed data utilizing the syllogistic paradigm.²⁴ He just made a passing reference to such an important issue by claiming that *Ejtehad* could be used to address the issues and problems of a modern society (Al Ahmad 1980, 257).

²⁴See Mottahedeh(1985), for example, for the exercise of *Ejtehad* in Shii tradition.

The second aporia that Al Ahmad faced was the choice of the agents for the dissemination of *rushanfekri*. In fact this aspect of his discourse has acquired such a pivotal significance that it has overshadowed the rest of his discourse. Al Ahmad reserved his most caustic criticism for secular Iranian intellectuals and the intelligentsia of the past and present. The greatest sin, he believed, committed by the Iranian intellectuals and intelligentsia was their rift and alienation from the social universal, resulting especially from their attack on the religious beliefs and traditions of the people. For example in a cursory review of some of the major figures of the 19th century Iranian enlightenment he dismissed their efforts as paltry (Al Ahmad 1980, 272-76). Even worse, he accused the majority of the intellectuals of being the pawns, if not direct agents, of cultural imperialism,

The intellectual in Iran is someone who in theory and practice, has a colonial approach in the name of a scientific approach. That means he discusses science, democracy and free thought [*azadandishi*] in an environment in which modern science is not established. Therefore, [the intellectual] does not know his indigenous people (i.e. his 'demos') to believe that they deserve democracy. Similarly, he exercises his free thought not against the rulers but only against the traditional institutions (religion, language, history, ethics and rituals) because exercising free thought is difficult against the rulers and colonial and semi-colonial institutions (Al Ahmad 1980, 50).²⁵

It was as a result of this colonial link, in his estimate, that the contemporary intellectual in Iran, "is still alienated from the people.

²⁵Al Ahmad also blamed the intellectuals for fleeing the front-line with the coming of Reza Shah's dictatorship and the concomitant process of what I have called the eclipse of universalizable subjectivity. See Al Ahmad 1980, 321-2.

[He] is not in touch with the people and inevitably has no concern for them. [He] thinks about problems which are not local; his problems are imported. As long as the Iranian intellectual is not familiar with his indigenous and local problems and does not try to solve them, the situation remains the same" (Al Ahmad 1980, 407).

Such an analysis of Iranian intellectuals by Al Ahmad was only possible by means of a relatively elaborate sociological discussion of intellectuals in which he heavily drew on Gramsci's work. Taking the Gramscian concept of organic intellectual as the model, Al coined the concept of indigenous (*bumi*) or "self-same" (*khodi*) intellectual in opposition to the *gharbzadeh* ("Westoxicated") and imperialist intellectual. Moreover, he considered the overwhelming majority of secular Iranian intellectuals since the 19th century to belong to the latter groups. This lead him to a desperate search for an "indigenous" type of intellectual to guide the people to their liberation.

Thus, the second aporia that Al Ahmad faced had its roots in the search for an "indigenous" type of intellectual. Well aware of the obscurantism of the clerics and their negating postures toward *rushanfekri*, he nevertheless gravitated toward them as the primary source of indigenous intellectuals who through their religious offices were closely in touch with the people. On numerous occasions Al Ahmad referred to the ineligibility of the clerics to become the intellectual and therefore political leaders of the nation because, like the military men, they belonged to the realm of "obedience" (*ta'abud*). But, at the same time he believed that "by the virtue of its defense of tradition, the Shii clergy is a type of resistance force

against the encroachments of colonialism whose primary target for pillage is cultural and traditional. Thus the clergy is a bulwark against the Westoxication of the intellectuals and the absolute submission of [our] governments toward the West and its imperialism." (Al Ahmad 1980, 255) Nevertheless, Al Ahmad stipulated that if the clerics decided to participate in socio-political movements they would have to drop the idea of government based on revelation or else they must refrain from political activity altogether (Al Ahmad 1980, 271).

The third dilemma that Al Ahmad faced was the question of which "self" to return to. As we have seen before, the crux of his problematic in his book Westoxication was to identify the substance with which to fill the "emptied personality" devoid of subjectivity which was produced by imperialism. We also saw that he identified rushanfekri, or what he considered to be true enlightenment and free thought, to constitute the basic elements of that substance. At the same time he could not ignore how deeply Islam and loyalty to the Islamic heritage were ingrained in the consciousness of the people of Iran.

Indeed none of the dilemmas faced by Al Ahmad were easy to solve. But the significance of his discourse lay in the fact that it opened the road for a return to a self which proved to be at odds with the principle of subjectivity. The full force of the return to this self became apparent in the religious discourse that I will examine in chapter five. But, for the rest of this chapter I will briefly analyze the theories of two other thinkers, Naraqi and Shayegan, who despite the confinements of their influence to mostly relatively small

intellectual circles, nevertheless explored other important dimensions of the theme of return-to-the-self.

Ehsan Naraqi (b.1926) is a French trained sociologist and Unesco official who in the 1970s contributed to the theme of return-to-the-self and whose work was popular particularly among some young college students who were westernized enough to be familiar with Western counter-culture and yet yearned for an authentic identity.

As a thinker who had lived for many years in the West and experienced the social movements there in the '60s and the '70s, Naraqi's work reflected, to a large extent, the Western counter-cultural critique of malcontents of modernity. Thus, although the applicability of Naraqi's discourse to the conditions of Iran was relatively limited, its most important contribution was to strengthen the merits of the convictions of the return-to-the-self, since no less authority than the Westerners themselves were involved in confirming the lost and maligned virtues of Iranians. In 1974, Naraqi published a book entitled The Alienation of the West (*Ghorbat Gharb*) in which he articulated some of the counter culture's critiques of the malcontents of modernity which also reflected some of the issues raised by critical theory. In this book Naraqi discussed some of the implications of such a critique by the Westerners themselves for a country like Iran which was trying to emulate Western technological achievements. In his next book entitled What the Self Had (*Anche Khud Dasht*) which was published two years later, he further developed this line of thought and more explicitly explored the possibility of a return to certain elements in the "native" culture.

Naraqi acknowledged his debt to the Western counter cultural movement and advised his compatriots not to dismiss it and understand its message (Naraqi 1975, 167). He warned that the same "alienation" that has engulfed the Westerners may also afflict the East,

Today, a sort of "alienation" [ghorbat] has surrounded the Western man. Alienation from the self, from one's home and finally from one's cohorts. This is a state which has nothing to do with geographic borders. This means that the "East" may also become the "West" and the sense of alienation may also engulf the Easterners (Naraqi 1974,10).

Contrasting the East and the West, Naraqi repeated the critique of domination of nature as an essential element of Western alienation. In the Eastern way of life, he wrote, "man did not dare to consider himself the master of nature. He did not find such an imprudence in himself to believe he could conquer nature. Since the Westerner has just done so ever since the Renaissance, now he has come to see that nature has rejected him" (Naraqi 1974, 159).

Reflecting the central theme of the Dialectic of Enlightenment, Naraqi reiterated the paradox of modern humans who in the very process of achieving subjectivity we have dominated ourselves,

In Western civilization, on the one hand, man as a subject is involved in the act of appropriating and controlling nature. On the other hand, the nature and man himself-- by virtue of being a part of nature-- are considered as objects to be appropriated and controlled (Naraqi 1976, 14).

Naraqi also articulated one of the main theses of Said's Orientalism, maintaining that if the Westerners have shown any interest in the East it has not been because they wanted to acquire any theory from

non-Western cultures to improve universal human culture. Rather their goal has been to search for archetypes to confirm and validate their own culture (Naraqi 1976,156).

The aggregate of all the disaffection, Naraqi believed, was enough to encourage Iranians to return to their cultural heritage. Yet, he never advocated a total abandoning of modernity. He did retain the need for science and technology but he criticized the ideology of developmentalism which was part of the underlying hegemonic discourse of the Pahlavi regime's efforts at gaining legitimacy. He wrote,

The European and American model of economic development has paid more attention to increase man's power vis-a-vis nature and has neglected the relations of man with man. In fact, its goal has been a struggle with nature and its conquest, even though this struggle, without paying attention to the human and social aspects, has liberated man from restrictions of nature. Yet it has imposed other restrictions upon him. Today it has become evident that development is not a mere technical and technological problem and human dimensions are also involved...The conclusion to draw is that human freedom and the realization of human personhood must be the main goal of development (Naraqi 1974,114-15; emphasis added).

It is evident from the above passage that Naraqi upheld the principles of universalizable subjectivity as the main objective of the new scheme for development. Even his advocacy of return to Islam was to derive the combined principles of freedom and responsibility (Naraqi 1976, 140). Yet, because of the political milieu of the 1970's Iran, his vital qualifications for the "return" were for the most part not registered by his audience.

Both Al Ahmad and Naraqi, while criticizing certain aspects of Iranian modernity, upheld the pillars of modernity. But this was not the case with Darush Shayegan (b.1934), the cosmopolitan Iranian philosopher whose discourse has had a direct impact on Iran's intellectual encounter with modernity, even though his direct influence, at least before the revolution of 1979, remained mostly confined to elite intellectual circles.

Shayegan was born into a wealthy "modern" family in Tehran. His father was a well-to-do merchant from Azarbayejan and his mother was a Georgian Sunni Muslim whose ancestry reached to the ruling families of Georgia. From an early age he became familiar with several languages and cultures. At home he learned Turkish in addition to Persian and became familiar with Russian , and soon learned French at the French missionary school in Tehran. When he was fifteen he was sent to a boarding school in London. He studied in different European countries and returned to Iran in 1960 when he began exploring Eastern Philosophies including the Persian Gnostic tradition and Indian philosophies. During his first return to Iran, he developed a keen interest in the religious and mystical traditions of Iran and studied with some of the leading figures in that tradition as he also observed ritual Muslim praying and fasting.²⁶

Shayegan's discourse must be divided into the opposite phases. During the first phase of his thought before the Revolution of 1979, Shayegan was very much influenced by Heidegger. But after the revolution he has taken up positions which are almost the exact opposite of his pre-revolutionary thoughts. In his Heideggerian

²⁶The biographical information on Shayegan is gathered from Shayegan 1995.

phase, he maintained that nihilism constituted the very foundation of modernity. In his book entitled Asia Confronting the West (*Asia Dar Barabar-e Gharb*) first published in 1977, he described modernity in terms of a destructive, violent, inevitable, ubiquitous and descending movement in the history of the "spirit" which in its irreversible excursion leaves nothing stable. Nietzsche was, according to Shayegan, the first person to discover its movement and its mode of action (Shayegan 1992a, 23-4). Thus, Nihilism, in Shayegan's analysis, was closely related to the anthropocentrism of modern subjectivity and the phenomenon of vacuity with added religious sensitivity towards "appetites". "Nihilism gradually substituted man's reason", he complained, "for Divine Revelation and in later stages instincts and appetites replace [human] reason" (Shayegan 1992a, 30).

For Shayegan Nihilism consisted of two moments. The first was what he called "Passive Nihilism" which destroys the congruence between value and end. As a consequence, "the power of faith gradually weakens and values which have no affinity with the end start railing against each other and the war of values begins". The second, and historically last, moment of nihilism, in Shayegan, was what he dubbed "Active Nihilism" or "absolute negation". He called it the period of decline of the West in which, "the vacuous and the absurd appear. This period of decline is a period of neither this nor that. In other words the declining phase in the West is a form of diseased consciousness which neither obeys terrestrial nor celestial [norms] and as a result denies everything" (Shayegan 1992a, 47).

Furthermore, Shayegan contended, the nihilism of the liberal age had called for the totalitarian and authoritarian responses of the 20th century. In the realm of thought, however, he saw two responses to the nihilism that constitute modernity. Borrowing a concept from Herman Rauschning, he dubbed the first response as the "de-realization of Reality" (Shayegan 1992a, 32). With this "response", which in fact was the extinction of the logic of Nihilism itself, every value and reality is undermined and questioned. Shayegan cited the works of Deluze, Timothy Leary, Alan Watts, Wilhelm Reich, R. D. Laing and Foucault as the examples of this type of response to nihilism.

The second type of response to nihilism Shayegan dubbed as the "Righteous Leap of Great Thinkers". By this he meant the meta-philosophical thought of thinkers such as Heidegger, Jasper and Tilich (Shayegan 1992a, 36-38). Shayegan left no doubt that his heart was pleased by this second response, especially the work of Heidegger. Reflecting the Heideggerian criticism of Western metaphysics going back to Plato's conception of the Idea and its characterization as subject-centered representation, Shayegan traced the historical emergence of subjectivity at the cost of the eclipse of the "Being" (Shayegan 1992a, 238). Shayegan criticized the principle of subjectivity as the central theme in modern philosophy which has given rise to domination and conquest in the West, without understanding the dialectics involved in the process,

Subjectivity in Fichte's philosophy is prior to Being and Hegel considered it the origin of the movement of the Absolute Spirit. Schopenhauer made the will the foundation of his philosophy and Nietzsche regarded the

eternal return as will to power. Will and want are the surging point in this way of thought and all later phases are to satisfy these...And since will refers to power, imperialism, conquest, domination and appropriation is inherent in this [Modern Western] culture (Shayegan 1992a, 234).

By juxtaposing the Hegelian notion of the emergence and unfolding of subjectivity against Heidegger's lamentation about the "forgetting of Being", Shayegan advocated the absolute surrender of the individuality and subjectivity to the universality.²⁷ For example he praised traditional Chinese civilization for its absolute surrender of the individual and subjectivity to the universal,

The view that this people [the Chinese] had of nature and the Origin is unrivaled. The principle of non-appropriation, non-action and submission to the bountiful forces of the Being...has been a distinctive characteristic of the ancient Chinese cosmology. The Chinese are the only people who invented gunpowder but did not make canons; they invented the compass but they did not give into [the urge] to discover new navigational routes and new continents which was one of the facets of the Western Renaissance(Shayegan 1992a, 60).

Based on these observations, Shayegan concluded that traditional societies such as Iran should avoid the nihilism that is modernity. In the Asian mode of thought, he concluded, the evolution of subjectivity from Plato to Hegel has never taken place (Shayegan 1992a, 239). "Our" Asian civilizations, he argued, have no affinity with the latest aspects of Western nihilism such as Marxism,

²⁷Ironically he seems to have missed the close affinity between totalitarian ideologies he criticized and the surrender of the individual subjectivity to the totality of the universal or "Being".

positivism or any other modern Western ideology (Shayegan 1992a, 19).

Shayegan's critique of modernity referred to some of the most poignant discontents of modernity such as the reduction of thought to calculation, ethics to utilitarianism, the dismissal of the essential forms of spirituality as metaphysics and the world changing from the "hearth" to "mechanism". But, at the same time he lamented about the disappearance of some of the most oppressive institutions of pre-modernity,

The disappearance of the hierarchical 'esteem' system has caused the elimination of authority and obedience which used to be the foundation of Asian social order. In those social orders there were links which connected the offspring with the father, the wife with the husband, the [Sufi] follower with the master, the creature with the creator, and the community with religion. There were also intermediary links which according to status and authority [of the persons involved] connected the members of the family, the urban community, the nation and the religious community in their own respective spheres and thus creating a pyramidal world in which each person had a definite place, each group an aspiration and each people a [structure of] order. But [modern] Western civilization has eroded this hierarchy and replaced it with the desire for democracy and freedom of every human vis-a-vis the law. In reality the law has replaced the caste system and the structure of responsibility found in medieval Western and Eastern societies (Shayegan 1992a, 144; emphasis added).

This analysis propelled Shayegan to view the democratic aspects of modern society as "mass society", as he ironically reflected Rene Guenon's view of egalitarian society as the kingdom of the Shudras on earth (Shayegan 1992a, 82).

Before the 1979 Revolution, Shayegan's audience consisted predominantly of the Iranian elite who had been highly exposed to the Western cultures but had become disenchanted with modernity. After the revolution, Shayegan seems to have gone through a phase of turnaround in which he has reversed his pre-revolutionary positions just about one hundred eighty degrees.²⁸ If before the revolution he was all for the universal or the "Being", in his book Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West, published in 1989 in France, he promoted the subject of modernity without any attempt at a reconciliation between the two.²⁹

Shayegan's discourse before the Revolution of 1979 was the last and most radical moment of the theme of the Return-to-the-Self which was produced by "secular" intellectuals and as such its audience was relatively small. However, as we will see in the next chapter this theme was brought to its logical conclusion and was given a religious content by Ali Shariati who appealed to a large audience among the Iranian people in the 1970's and 80's.

²⁸As Ali Banuazizi has observed, such an extreme dichotomization between modernity and tradition and lack of dialectical view of the relation between the two, entailed by the two phases of Shayegan's work, is not conducive to a viable society in our time. See Banuazizi 1993.

²⁹That he seems to be coming out of this phase too and adopting a more "moderate" position which attempts to make a synthesis between the Subject and Being is indicated in his recent book *Zir Asmanha-ye Jahan (Under the Skies of the World)*. But a discussion of this book is beyond the scope of this chapter. See Shayegan 1995.

Part III. Islamic Discourse and Modernity

In this part my focus is on Islamic socio-political thought in Iran in the last four decades of the 20th century. In chapter five I will closely analyze the Islamic revolutionary discourses in the 1960s and '70s in the works of the three main architects of the Islamic revolution, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Motahhari. I will try to explicate the complexity of their thought with regards to their relations to the tenets of modern thought. I attempt to achieve this by delving into the underlying metaphysical assumptions of their discourse and their sociological implications.

In chapter six I will follow up the unfolding of the Islamic discourse in the post-revolutionary period. In contrast to what has been portrayed by many western sources, the development of socio-political thought in Iran has been halted by the establishment of the Islamic regime. In fact the dynamics of the revolutionary Islamic discourse of 1960s and '70s has given rise to two distinct post-revolutionary discourses with opposite potentials for accommodation of modernity. I will examine the thought of two intellectuals most closely identified with these discourses and attempt to analyze their sociological implications in the context of the urgency of Iran's post-revolutionary needs in coping with modernity and the popular desire for democratic reforms and economic development.

Chapter 5

Islamic Revolutionary Thought: The Self as Mediated Subjectivity

The call to return to the self initiated by Jalal Al Ahmad touched a responsive cord among many groups and states in the Iran of 1960s and 1970s. In chapter four I tried to analyze the work of some of the "secular" intellectuals who responded to this call. Al Ahmad's invitation was also enthusiastically received by many groups and individuals among the religious classes. However, it would be a mistake to ignore the fact that some religious figures, most prominent among them Ayatollah Khomeini, long before and independently of Al Ahmad, had reached similar conclusions. As early as mid 1940s, Ayatollah Khomeini in a book entitled *Kashf al-Asrar*, or Secrets Unveiled, called for the activation of the clauses in the Constitution of 1906, which were designed to guarantee the conformities of laws of the state with those of the *Sharia* (Divine Law).

Islamic revolutionary thought, as developed by its main three architects discussed in this chapter, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Motahhari, is directly and indirectly a response to the discourse of modernity discussed in previous chapters and the course and consequences of the policies of positivist modernity implemented by the Pahlavi dynasty.¹ Khomeini's early discourse

¹Even though Shariati, and Motahhari may be considered the central figures in the construction of Islamic revolutionary thought which culminated in the revolution of 1979, there were other theorists and activists whose thoughts significantly contributed to the making of Islamic discourse in Iran. For an informative general analysis of their works see Dabashi 1993.

of the 1940s, engaged both the positivist modern thought of Kasravi (discussed in chapter 3) and the policies of Reza Shah. It may be assumed that the main thrust of the Islamic revolutionary discourse in Iran was to refute the discourse of modernity. To be sure the three theorists discussed here advanced serious challenges aimed at the discourse of modernity in Iran going back to the early Iranian thinkers and importers of modernity in Nineteenth century. But in their own discourses the Islamic theorists have been much influenced by the discourse they set out to challenge. As a result the discourse of Islamic revolution in Iran has incorporated certain very crucial elements of the modern discourse which has made the analysis of revolutionary thought, and practices in Iran a complicated subject. The impact of Kasravi's brand of modern thought on Ayatollah Khomeini's, for example, can be gauged by the style of the prose he utilized in his book Secrets Unveiled. In his pursuit of cultural nationalist politics, which often border on extremism, Kasravi had developed a unique prose which boasted of using "pure" Persian vocabulary at the expense of Arabic and Turkish loan words. For example, on numerous instance Ayatollah Khomeini lapses into Kasravi's style in Secrets Unveiled that is unmistakable for anyone familiar with the Persian language. Ali Shariati, on the other hand, who had early in his life taken on modern European thought such as Marxism and existentialism, in many regards "goes native" in his more mature engagement of these European discourses. Ayatollah Motahhari's life long obsession with the issue of "predestination" and its impact on a dynamic civilization was also, as we will see later, motivated by the wish to refute certain Western observations about

the putative prevalence of fatalism and predestination in Islamic civilization. However, the development and vigor of the revolutionary Islamic discourse was not only a response to the strength and appeal of secular discourses and modernists, but also a reaction to their weakness and failure. The weakness and ultimate failure of the liberal-democratic, socialist, Marxist and liberal nationalist discourses and movements, especially their failure in mobilizing the popular classes throughout the twentieth century was as much an important factor in the growth of the Islamic discourse and movement as the challenge of the hegemony of secular discourses. The unique ability of the Islamic movement to mobilize the bulk of the population in Iran, as I will try to demonstrate in this chapter, owed its success to the strong universalistic elements in this discourse. Indeed, primarily because of its ability to reach and mobilize the social universal, the Islamic discourse appealed to and received support from secular movements and individuals.

The socio-political context in which Islamic revolutionary thought took shape is also very significant for its understanding. The developmental politics issuing from the positivist modernity of the Pahlavis and their consequences, prevalent especially during the reign of the second Pahlavi monarch, had significant implications for the discourse and politics of the Islamic movement in Iran. Similarly, the political events, played out in the intersection between international politics of the Cold War and domestic Iranian politics, also had a direct bearing on the shaping and the success of the Islamic discourse, especially after the events of August 1953, when the government of Mohammad Mossadeq was overthrown by the

C.I.A. sponsored coup désté. Reza Shah's period (r. 1925-1941) had witnessed the rapid undermining of the power and influence of the religious establishment deliberately undertaken by the state. The reduction of the size of religious endowments and in many cases their appropriation by the Ministry of Endowments, meant a serious threat to the economic base of the independence of the clerical order. The establishment of the centralized and state controlled institutions of education and justice system also wrested away the Mullahs' historically dominant roles in these important arenas. The introduction of a compulsory national conscription system also was perceived to curtail the clerics' influence among the populace, especially those in the countryside. Finally what the Mullahs found outrageous and humiliating was the forced unveiling of women in 1936 and the compulsory imposition of European dress style for men, not least because of their own inability and silence before the state's use of brute force in carrying out its violation of public moral sentiments among the popular classes. Ayatollah Khomeini's career as an Islamic revolutionary ideologue should be traced back to this period. The period between 1941, when Reza Shah was forced to abdicate by the Allies and 1953, was marked by political democracy and chaos. During this period the liberal nationalist movement headed by Mossadeq and the Marxist Tudeh movement both carried the day but by the end of this period their hegemonic discourse had been played out.

After the C.I.A. backed coup of August 1953, in which the throne of the Shah was restored and the Tudeh and nationalist movements decimated, the Islamic movement and its discourse received a new

lease on life. The religious elements within the nationalist movement headed by Mehdi Bazargan took a leading role in the establishment of National Resistance Movement, the first resistance movement against the emergence of fully developed dictatorship of the Shah (Chehabi 1990, 31). However, it was only after the early 1960s and the emergence of full fledged dictatorship of the Shah that the Islamic movement and its discourse came of age also. In 1961, Medhi Bazargan, who later became the Prime Minister during the transitional period of regime change in 1979, founded the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), a political organization of professional middle class Iranians with relatively liberal Islamic views on politics and society.² After the bloody suppression of the religiously inspired uprising in the spring of 1963 in which Khomeini and his followers played a key role, the monarchical dictatorship increasingly assumed extensive dimensions. The comprehensive control of the Shah's secret police, the SAVAK, over public life, the banning of independent political parties and widespread censorship of literature, art and political discourse created an ideological vacuum which made the ascendancy of religious discourse possible.

The Shah's regime's obsessive desire to control the Marxist and Communist Movement and propaganda resulted in relative tolerance of the dissemination of Islamic discourse and activities to counteract the expansion of Marxist ideologies in the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, the last two decades before the Islamic Revolution witnessed the flourishing of Islamic Associations (*Anjomans*) among

² See H.E. Chehabi 1990, for a detailed analysis of the role and discourse of the LMI

the intelligentsia. Some of these associations were well organized with their own publications and propaganda apparatuses. Most prominent of these organization were *Goftar-e Mah*, or *The Month's Discourse*, a large public discussion group with its own journal of the same name and *Husseinieh Ershad*, an Islamic center for political and social activities in which Ayatollah Motahhari and Ali Shariati were actively involved. A parallel development, though less important than the activities of religious and middle class intelligentsia, was the rapid growth of religious activities among the recent urban migrants in large cities. As a result of the land reform of the early 1960s and the uneven industrialization of the economy in the 1960s and 1970s, the urban population increased nearly by three fold (Arjomand 1988, 91). However, the religious societies (*heyats*) formed mostly by those poor urban migrants, did not have an overwhelmingly political and ideological character until the eve of the revolution when they served as a ready made network of political organizations for the revolutionary purposes of the radical clergy.³

The Islamic discourse that developed in such intellectual, political and social contexts was indeed variegated and nuanced. And the discourses of the three men we are going to discuss in this chapter reflect this opalescence. However, the most basic element that connected the discourses of Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Motahhari was the phenomenon to which I have referred as "mediated subjectivity." By mediated subjectivity I refer to the violation of human subjectivity projected onto the

³According to Arjomand's estimation, by 1974, there were over 12,000 of these religious societies in Tehran alone (See Arjomand 1988, 92).

attributes of monotheistic deity-- attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and volition-- and then partially re-appropriated by humans. In this scheme human subjectivity is contingent on God's subjectivity. This while human subjectivity is not denied, it is never independent of God's subjectivity and in this sense it is "mediated." This situation is usually conducive to a great conflict between the Divine Subjectivity and human subjectivity which gives rise to various other types of conflicts. One of the sharpest conflicts that result from this core conflict is, as we will see, the constant and almost schizophrenic shifting of grounds between a confirmation and negation of human subjectivity in general as well as a constant oscillation between individual subjectivity and collectivity. In Islamic discourse this concept is usually expressed in the notion of the human as the vicegerent of God on earth which in Arabic is rendered as *Khalifatollah*, literally meaning God's Caliph or successor.⁴

The main criterion for selecting Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Motahhari as the representatives of the Islamic revolutionary discourse in Iran has been the popularity of their appeal among various classes and groups before and after the revolution. The thoughts and ideas of these three men have been disseminated in Iran, and indeed around the world, in the form of

4 The Quranic concept of the human as God's vicegerent on earth which explicitly informs the discourse of Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Motahhari-- Ayatollah Khomeini does not seem to have referred to it explicitly-- also constitutes an important theme in the thought of other important Islamic Thinkers such as Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleqani; but because of space, an analysis of their discourse is beyond the scope of this chapter.

lecture, sermon, photocopied handouts, audio tapes, books, etc., on a scale unprecedented in Iranian history. Among these three men Ali Shariati's appeal was the strongest among the lower middle and middle class intelligentsia who found him a figure who could restore to them their lost "self" without totally alienating them from their newly acquired identities as moderns.

Ali Shariati: Mediated Subjectivity and the Authenticity of the Collectively

Ali Shariati (1933-1977) was born into a devout family in Mazinan, a desert village in the province of Khorasan in the northeastern part of Iran. His father, though not a cleric, was an Islamic scholar and a well known preacher (Keddie, 1981, 215). But soon after his birth, Shariati's family moved to the holy city of Mashhad, the capital of the province, a move that despite Ali's respect and love for his father, he later disapproved because of the alleged corrupting effects of city life in general, as opposed to the presumed simple "purity" of desert life (Dabashi 1993, 105; Shariati 1983a, 254). Perhaps the greatest influence on him in his early childhood was his father whose two thousand book library must have been a great asset for his intellectual development (Chehabi 1990, 187). Shariati received his secondary education in Mashad, while privately learning religious science, Arabic and some French (Chehabi 1990, 187). At age 17 he attended the Teacher Training College and after two years he became a teacher teaching in nearby villages. At the same time he began translating and writing on religion and Shi'i topics while he was active in the nationalist

movement led by Mossadeq (Keddie 1981, 215). At age 23, he entered the newly opened faculty of belle letters at Mashad University and received his bachelor's degree in 1959, finishing at the top of his class. His academic success granted him a state scholarship to study abroad which, after a period of delay because of his political activities, materialized in pursuit of graduate studies in Paris. While in Paris Shariati pursued an active life in politics of the 1960s France. Owing to the anti-colonial movements in general and the Algerian Independence movement in particular, Paris at this time had become a center for activities of Third World intellectual and political activists. Shariati soon became familiar with many of them, even though, contrary to his disciples' claims, he was not in close personal contact with famous figures such as Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre (Chehabi 1990, 188). It is also widely believed that he received a degree in Sociology from the Sorbonne. But according to Hooshang Chehabi and Nikki Keddie, he received a *doctorate d'universite* which is lower than a Ph.D. and it was in Persian philology, not Sociology, and his thesis was a translation and edition of a classical Persian medieval text (Chehabi 1990, 188; Keddie 1981, 215, 294).

Because of his political activities and involvement in the overseas branch of Bazargan's Liberation Movement, Shariati was arrested and jailed for six months upon his return to Iran in 1964. After his release, he began teaching in a village in Khorasan, then in a high school in Mashhad and later he became assistant professor at University of Mashhad. There he taught very popular courses drawing on his interpretation of Islam and Shiism. In 1967, at the

invitation of Ayatollah Motahhari, Shariati went to Tehran and gave a series of lectures at the Husseiniyah Ershad. These lectures were to become so popular that they eclipsed Motahhari's popularity. Until his untimely death in a London hospital on June 19, 1977, Shariati devoted his life to the propagation of his revolutionary interpretation of Islam and developed a very large following among the religiously oriented young intelligentsia in search of an authentic, yet modern identity.

Recovery of the "Self"

As the closest heir to Al Ahmad's legacy in broaching the crisis of Iranian identity among the religious thinkers, Shariati devoted a good amount of his discursive attention to this theme. Apparently much influenced by the discourse of the Western Left on the topics of "alienation," and "reification," Shariati's attention was attracted to these issues. In a series of lectures which were published under the title of *Ialamshenasi* ("Islamology") Shariati devoted many pages to identify at least fifteen different types of "alienation". He included among these the "estrangement" caused by such diverse phenomena as "superstitious religion," "magic," "polytheism" (*shirk*), "asceticism," "mechanization," "bureaucracy," "class system," "love and faith," "hero worship," "scientism," "money," "civilization," "goal seeking," "society," "materialism," and "idealism," as possible types of alienation of humans from the authentic selves (Shariati c1972a 328-366). However, one form of alienation that he did not mention in this lecture, and has constituted one of his much discussed themes in his other works, was the concept of "assimilation." Often used in French

transliteration, assimilation meant for him the effort to "distance oneself from all the personal and social or national characteristics to identify with the other in order to overcome one's inferiority and enjoy the feeling of honor and superiority sensed in the other" (Shariati 1979, 3).

Obviously, the result of assimilation was the loss of self or in Persian *Khudbakhtegi*, a concept that even Ayatollah Khomeini frequently used in his rhetoric later. Thus, Shariati viewed the process of "becoming modern" (*motejaded shodan*) as one of the most sinister means by which the West imposed the seduction of modernity on the Easterners.

The Europeans occupied themselves with the task of creating the enticement to become modern in all societies regardless of their type. They knew that if they could by some ruse create the enticement and infatuation to become modern in the Easterner, he would even cooperate with them to sever his ties to whatever was handed down to him from the past. He would sever his ties to any factor that would have made him superior to the European; with the aid of the European, the Easterner would destroy everything that creates political character, culture and religion by his own hand (Shariati 1979a, 19).

But in addition to the cultural dimension, imperialism qua "modernization," according to Shariati, also involves a very important material dimension. Modernization is comprised of the transformation of traditions as well as change in the patterns of consumption. Because the old consumption patterns were based on the domestic and self-sufficient economy, the new consumption

patterns, along with the European machine made products, had to be imported and imposed (Shariati 1979a, 23-24). Here Shariati shared Al Ahmad's thesis that cultural imperialism was the result of the more "basic" exigency of imperialism, which, as we saw in chapter 4, held that international capitalism, in order to find markets for its surplus products, had to explore the countries of the Third World and in order to capture their markets it had to destroy their native traditions which politically and culturally blocked it's intentions.

In an essay entitled "Return to the Self" (*Bazgasht be Khish*) Shariati, just like Al Ahmad, referred to this phenomena of cultural imperialism as the "emptying" of the self (Shariati 1987, 2). But, unlike Al Ahmad, for whom the category of consumerism had been but one element of this "empty" self, Shariati treated the issue of consumerism as a major category in his analysis of "inauthenticity" under neocolonial conditions. The reason for this emphasis, as we will see later, may lie in Shariati's religious ontology, which deemed the human body and anything related to it as items for consumption, and as such had be transcended. On the other hand, Shariati, complained about the loss of human volition and consciousness resulting from the process of assimilation. As Shariati put it in his poetic style,

In the imitator, whether modern or old-fashioned,
consciousness, volition, choice and judgment is annulled.
Praising of the sultan's wishes constitutes his[imitator's]
principles so that if the sultan call the day night, the
imitator would reply, here is the moon and here are the
stars (Shariati 1971a, 60-61).

Just as Al Ahmad had accorded a prominent role to intellectuals in the shaping of the nation's destiny and criticized them for being alienated from the bulk of the population, so did Shariati. In his celebrated book Fatima is Fatima, while he credited the intellectuals for seeking freedom (though he did not mean individual freedom) and equality for the masses, he faulted them for ignoring their strong roots in religion (Shariati 1971a, 29-30). Utilizing a language very similar to Al Ahmad, Shariati fulminated against the "modernized pseudo-intellectuals" as the "guides" (*rah balad*) for colonialism (*Fatima is Fatima*, 27). He also criticized the intellectuals in Islamic societies for imitating their European counterparts in the struggle against religion which in Europe was justified while in the East the campaign against religion did not have any results except to destroy the bulwark against imperialism (Shariati c1972b, 21).⁵

Shariati correctly observed the enormous cultural and social gap that had been created among different strata and classes in Iranian society in the twentieth century. The emergence of a "dual society," a phenomenon common in many countries where a relatively small segment of society is separated from the rest and becomes "modernized," at least in habits and mode of subsistence, was a glaring social fact in the 1960s and 1970s, in Iran.⁶ Shariati thought that this problem was not only caused by intellectuals, but they also held the key to its solution. Thus he thought that the "organic" and socially committed intellectual were the only group of people in Iran

⁵In the same essay Shariati attacked Mirza Malkum Khan as the prototype of intellectual implanted in the East by Western imperialism (Shariati c1972b, 57-58).

⁶See Ashraf 1981.

who could bridge this gap. In an essay entitled "Whence Do We Begin" (*Az Koja Aghaz Konim?*) he appealed to the intellectuals, especially the religiously oriented ones, and charged them with the task of restoring the lost, and unified self of Iranians once more (Shariati 1975, 8). Now, the most essential question to ask is to what "self" did Shariati want to return? What were the constituent elements of this utopian ipseism that Shariati led his followers to?

There is no doubt that the roots of this "self" to which he felt a calling to return, were firmly established in the Islamic past in general and the Shi'i religion in particular. However this did not mean to exclude Iranian culture as such. On different occasions he alluded to the specific contributions of the Iranian culture to the making of Islamic civilization.⁷ It would be a grave mistake, however, if we assume the historical "self" to which Shariati alluded was simply a return to the primal past. The historical self of Shariati was the product of a radical reinterpretation of religion and culture. In an article titled "Return to The Self" (not to be confused with the book with the same title) Shariati used the term *rushanfekri* to refer to the same concept of enlightenment of modernity as Al Ahmad had used (Shariati 1976a, 15). But he insisted that each society should achieve *rushanfekri* based on its own history, culture and language. He assailed the "West" for attempting to impose its own kind of enlightenment on the rest of the world,

⁷In his book Return to the Self, for example, he said, "After fourteen centuries of companionship between Iran and Islam, a rich and expansive culture has appeared in which the two elements are indistinguishable." (Shariati 1979a, 61).

since the eighteenth century, the West, with the aid of its sociologists, historians, writers, artists and even its revolutionaries and humanists, has imposed on the world, the thesis that there is only kind of civilization and that is the western form (Shariati 1976a, 16-17).

Thus Shariati like many other Third World intellectuals stepped into the thorny conundrum of "authenticity". While, as we will see below, his project of the creating of a "new" self involved an interpretation of monotheism as a vehicle for achieving human moral autonomy based on consciousness and will, as a universal category, in his dabbling in the concept of authenticity he subscribed to an essentialist view of human existence in which particularisms such as culture, historical experience, ethnicity, religion, etc. constitute the "new" self,

The real or authentic existence is an existence which crystallized in the "I" in the course of centuries of building history, culture, civilization, art. It is what gives me a cultural identity vis-a-vis other cultures-- the West, the East, the American and African. It is my real existence that when I am before the French, the English, the American or the Chinese, I can say, "I" as they can say "I"... And this is an existence that has been created in the course of history... This authentic personality, my human personality, distinguishes me from the other (Shariati 1976a, 21-22).⁸

However, in the same essay Shariati reiterates his rejection of the traditional self that has been concocted and imposed by tradition as

⁸ For a good analysis of Shariati's thought and the concept of authenticity, see Robert Lee 1997.

"neo-reactionary" and "antiquarian" (*kohneh parasti*) (Shariati 1976a, 33). The "new" self that Shariati was proposing was based on a reading of monotheistic metaphysics which, implicitly or explicitly constitutes the ontological foundations of what I have called "mediated subjectivity," common among the three theorists considered in this chapter.

Mediated Subjectivity as the Authentic Self

Like the two other Islamic theorists I will discuss in this chapter Shariati posited human subjectivity based on God's subjectivity. Alluding to the Quranic conception of humans as God's vicegerent, or His successor on earth, he wrote,

Man, before whom the angels prostrated themselves, is the successor of God in nature. As privy to God's secrets and as His special trustee, who posses His character and shares His spirit, man has volition, freedom, responsibility, vision, consciousness, creativity, perfection, beauty and wisdom. He is the creator of his destiny and responsible for his time, society, faith, culture, history and future (1979b, 107).

As we can see in the above passage, Shariati enumerated all the elements of modern subjectivity. He even identified human volitive capacity as the grounding of humans' roundabout subjectivity. "The only superiority that man has over all other beings in the universe, lies in his will... Therefore, man is the successor of God on earth and his kin. The spirit of God and man are nourished from the same source of excellence, that is having volition" (Shariati c1980, 11-12).

Yet, in Shariati's scheme, as well as the other two theorists discussed in this chapter, the subjectivist autonomy of humans entails submission to God's will. All three theorists, implicitly or explicitly, perceive this as contradictory and, as we will see much of their philosophical efforts are devoted to smooth away this presumed contradiction. It is in this perceived contradiction that lies the source of the three theorists' constant vacillation between posting human subjectivity and then negating it in various ways, almost immediately.

Be that as it may, the mechanism that Shariati, as well as Khomeini and Motahhari utilized to arrive at human subjectivity, was an interpretation of the metaphysics of monotheism, that viewed human existence in terms of a "journey" or "movement" which started at the level of "matter" and would carry and elevate humans to the level of God's spirit,

In the language of religion, man is a divine essence, an essence superior to matter and dominant over nature. He originates from God's Spirit, which means he possesses God's attributes. But since the Fall [*Hubut*] onto the earth, nature and society, man has forgotten his "primal self-divinity" (*khud khodai nukhustin*] and merely allows his material and animal inclination to develop. As a result the sublime values invested in him die out and he considers himself merely as the highest life in the evolution of animals. He forgets that he is a spark from the divine realm, that his mission is to "divinize" the world and that his being is God-like. He reaches such a lowly status that at the peak of civilization and scientific progress, he deems himself to be an offspring of the monkey, or the fruit of sexuality, or the product of labor.(Shariati 1977a, 19).

As it is already evident in the above passage this journey to subjectivity entails a radical flight from nature as a vile materiality to be shunned. In one of his more mystical and poetic works, Shariati defined the most important type of human estrangement in terms of alienation in nature and not from nature. He called nature the "Desolate Abode" (*Kharab Abad*) which as alienated the "genuine essences" that humans are from their true selves. This estrangement prevents humans from ever feeling at "home" in nature as the "unconscious" and "lowly" nature has engulfed them without their consent. This, Shariati claimed, explains the dual mode of humans' existence. On the one hand being a part of nature and on the other hand being driven by the urge to transcend it from the very beginning, a fact that is reflected in the most profound philosophies of humans (Shariati 1983a, 551).

This stark subjectivist metaphysics entailed a severe frowning upon nature as corporeal materiality and human body as part of it, the "prisons" from which the aspiring subject must be liberated. Shariati defined religion as the effort of humans to cleanse their essence from the "pollution of existence" and return from "soil" to God by consecrating nature and life (Shariati 1983a, 555). Mysticism for him represented the same effort to eliminate the material self as a hindrance in the journey to subjectivity (Shariati 1983a, 555-556). He even thought of art as the manifestation of this transcendental movement away from nature and what is to what "ought" to be. He mentioned Picasso as an example of an artist who has successfully transcended nature (Shariati 1983a, 560). In an interesting

poetically written passage, Shariati reversed the admiration for the rising sun at dawn found in classical Persian poetry, by asserting that the "unconscious" and "unwilled" break of the morning does not deserve the admiration of the volitive and cognitive subject,

The unconscious appearance of the dawn, without volition or sensibility, is flawed before the poet's spirit which feels and thinks the universe. The poet seeks a dawn which like a brute hero rises from behind the horizon, dagger in hand, slits the black throat of the night by intention ... nature does not offer such a dawn (Shariati 1983a, 560).

Such an ontological hostility toward the outer and inner nature is clearly reflected in Shariati's more sociological thought on the human body. To be sure his frequent criticism of the "decadence" exhibited by the Iranian westernized middle class, especially that of their women, in paying excessive attention to the body, was partially informed by his critique of the "consumerist" culture imposed by imperialism. Yet his obsession against the human body is also rooted in his ontological journey toward subjectivity. In his famous book Fatima is Fatima, Shariati excluded sexual rights and freedoms from human rights, since the former merely represented the deceptions and distractions devised by cultural imperialism and capitalism to divert the attention of youth in the West and the East from the fact of their exploitation and colonization (Shariati 1971, 62).⁹

⁹ It should be noted that Shariati's and his cohorts' views on human body and sexuality often did not mean a complete denial of "instincts" in compliance with the Islamic tradition of rejection of "asceticism". Rather they meant control, regulation and disciplining, but not total denial.

Thus, Shariati considered Islam as the most perfect world religion which grants humans authentic subjectivity, a religion for both this world and next. It is a religion that while attempting to transcend nature and elevate humans to their higher status, does not alienate them from nature, since the "deification of man" takes place in the "lap of nature" (Shariati 1994, 221). Islam, Shariati believed, was the religion which gave the Bedouin Abuzar (a close companion of the Prophet whom Shariati often praised as a model of a revolutionary socialist) a personhood and subjectivity among all those "faceless" infidels around him (Shariati 1994, 153). The most important aspect of subjectivity the Islam provided was its emphasis on human "dignity" (*ezat*) and rejection of abjection (*zellat*). Abjection is not God's will, rather God's will is human dignity, and those who are abjected and poverty stricken are so because they have acquiesced to them (Shariati 1994, 256). He even interpreted martyrdom as a means of securing human dignity found in praxis and the ability to choose freely (Shariati 1977b, 52).

Shariati attempted to ground his notion of mediated subjectivity in consciousness, but his interpretation of consciousness was quite different from that of individual subjectivity or the Helgelian self-conscious as subjective freedom. For him consciousness was tantamount to ideology, conviction and faith. Throughout his discourse, Shariati considered consciousness as consisting of the ideology of the Islamic movement. "Life," he often said, "is conviction, struggle and nothing else," (Shariati c1979a, 225).

On the more ontological plane, however, Shariati's journey toward subjectivity does not arrive in subjectivity, but in an "annihilation" in

God. For example, in a letter apparently written to his son and appended to his mystical book Kavir (The Desert) he advanced the analogy of the "river" and the "ocean" to describe the relation between God and humans in their journey toward subjectivity. Using the tropes of the "sun" and the "ocean" to represent the Divine origin and influence, he wrote that while the river originates from the ocean, it is frozen and static without the sun's rays which impart consciousness to it and make it move again to the direction of the ocean. But once it is reunited with the ocean it is in the form of "submergence" and "fusion," implying the surrender of subjectivity (Shariati 1983a, 566).

Contradictions of Mediated Subjectivity

Shariati's relation to human subjectivity, as I mention before, was a constant shift between its affirmation and negation. In a passage which may amount to an ode to human subjectivity, found in another poetic and mystical work, the Fall, he wrote,

Man is an animal who just like a tree grows toward the sky above. He is the tall statue of rebellion who has risen from the lowliness of the mundane world toward the beyond. He has been created in the image of imagination and dream to pierce all ceilings. All his organs are swords fighting whatever "is". He fights against whatever holds him, whatever imposes on him. He has a rebellious neck to stick out. He has not submitted to the corrosive effects of the elements and has not surrendered in weakness; he has not conformed to the bonds of nature. He wishes to break, tear, pierce, clutter, soar and be liberated. He is the tree of rebellion, the flower of negation. His answer to the eternal

"is" is "no." By gradual negation of nature he affirms himself, creates himself, he "becomes." Nietzschean nihilism is true, the [Hegelian] return to the Absolute Idea, the Absolute I, is true (Shariati 1983b, 144-115).

But immediately after this passage, a "voice from the depth" of his "nature" calls him not to listen to anything except revelation which is encoded as the "pure blue color of the sky." This constant affirmation and negation of subjectivity in Shariati is often described by himself as a "bewilderment," as if he has suddenly realized that his ontological journey is the same as the one that has been traversed by the West resulting in the diremption from nature and the existential angst accompanied by subjectivity. Shariati describes a phase in his journey as the "desert of bewilderment" (*heyrat*) (Shariati 1983b, 117). In my reading, this stage of bewilderment represents the core of Shariati's ontological vicissitudes. He described human existence before the diremption resulting from the journey to subjectivity as a stage of protected imprisonment much similar to the fetal stage in human ontogenetic development. But after the diremption he recognizes the emerging subjects as capable of knowing nature, in fact of capable of creating another nature and creating history (Shariati 1983b, 118). As such, Shariati bemoans the possibility of his path leading to the "monads" of modernity and nihilism of the "unlimited plane of freedom." (Shariati 1983b, 119). At the same time Shariati seems quite excited by the possibility of humans becoming the creators of their own selves (Shariati 1983b, 119).

Astounded by the possibility of humans becoming god-like as a result of his ontological journey and at the same time alarmed and appalled by the results of a similar journey in the West, Shariati vacillated between a subject oriented anthropocentrism and a religious mystical solution. He wrote,

Everything is leading to man. I see history as different streams which started from different distant points and flowing during centuries in different and sometimes opposite direction. But now they are all converging to create a large river and joining a great sea (Shariati 1983b, 134).

But at the same time Shariati can not hide his fervor for the possibility of human subjectivity, however mediated,

We all return to God, "Obey me (Oman) so I shall make you like me." "I (God) wanted to create a vicegerent on earth." "When Man was created I breathed MY SPIRIT in him! God created man in His images." All these words testify that in man God inheres (Shariati 1983b, 135).

Shariati described his ontological ambivalence in terms of the tragedy of human destiny marked by the impatience for liberation and then the angst for salvation from the same liberation (Shariati 1983b, 148-49). Not surprisingly he found the resolution of the bewilderment in submission to the Being and annihilation in God. He analogized the subject of modernity to the "lonely wolf" that after challenging the Being and nature now finds the solitude of subjectivity horrifying (Shariati 1983b, 185). In the last page of The Fall, Shariati points to the solution as the annihilation of the self in

God, to find a "new" self who in cooperation with God and Love would create the universe anew in a utopia of mediated subjectivity.

I return. I seek the paradise I left. I wash my hands of the original sin, the rebellion. I will liberate all the compartments of my original paradise of my "self." [I will liberate] nature, history society and even my self [from my "self"]. There I, Love and God will scheme together to create the universe anew, to create the creation again. In the new beginning God will not be alone. In this universe I will no longer be estranged... We will bring the heaven to earth, a heaven in which all trees are the forbidden tree, we create a world in which our skillful hands are it's architects (Shariati 1983b, 203-204).

Shariati's ambivalence is repeated in another "mystical" writing, *Ma'bad*, literally meaning The Temple, in which he more explicitly approached the case of European enlightenment. In this work, which is represented in a chronological narrative, he utilized the trope of night and day to refer to the age of "enchantment" and "disenchantment" as tandem historical processes. In the first part of the narrative Shariati presents the "enchantment" as a time of calm and quiet (Shariati 1983c, 424-27). Then there is the sudden and dazzling enlightenment to which Shariati refers as a cosmic fireworks (Temple, 431). He acknowledges the "wonderful" new world that the enlightenment has brought about. But, alas his eyes are so used to darkness that the new bright lights severely torment them. He is forced to see the lights but it is difficult to bear their brightness. Moreover, the "soul" of the Easterner finds peace only in submission,

My long living in the night has made my eyes so used to darkness that the bright light of this fireworks severely irritates them... It is a strange spectacle; neither can I watch nor can I not watch. My heart is filled with excitement at the sight of this grand spectacle, but my soul is tormented by so much impetuous, explosions, and disarrayed rebellions... My soul finds peace only in submission while this spectacle tortures it. Certainty, peace and serenity, however dark and cold, and hopeless is more consoling to my soul that the dazzling dashing and heated rebellions of restive hope (Shariati 1983c, 433-34).

It is interesting that Shariati, in this piece and in a Marxist-Positivist frame of mind refers to the "age of darkness" as corresponding to "feudalism" (in French transliteration) and to the age of enlightenment as "science" (Shariati 1983c, 435). Then he finds himself in a melodramatic nostalgia for the lost virtues of feudalism such as fortitude (*hamiyat*), chivalry and largess, virtues that are beyond the small minds of the petit-bourgeois hoarding and calculating mice of enlightened modernity (Shariati 1983c, 435).

The upshot of Shariati's thought on the question of enlightenment is that he, representing the Easterner, favors the surrender to "darkness" and even though he might find the new light joyous and uplifting, the burden of twenty five centuries forces him to remain in his state of serene submission (Shariati 1983c, 437-38). And again he uses the trope of river and ocean as the surrender of the aspiring subject to the ocean, while referring to the light of "enlightenment" as the "hellish" sun of the desert which has caused the diremption of the river from the ocean and the subject from the Being in the first

place (Temple 439-41). Finally, in religion he finds his "enlightenment" without the "obscurantism" (i.e., the European enlightenment) in which the West has been engulfed and his night becomes a "bright day" by the light of faith and love without costing his cherished sanity (Shariati 1983c, 446-47).

On a less abstract level, Shariati's version of mediated subjectivity also resulted in other contradictions. At the same time that he advocated autonomous human action, he also believed that human action must be guided by "models" for imitation and by external criteria. Thus, on the one hand Shariati rejected, for example in his book Fatima is Fatima, the traditional concept of interceding by the "saints" on behalf of the believers (*shafa'at*) as an instance of larger human autonomy . On the other hand, he thought that every human society is in need of external guidance from above in the form of "models" as religious saints or mythical figures.¹⁰ In an essay entitled "Awaiting the creed of Protest," (*Entezar Mazhab-e E'teraz*) Shariati praised the early Muslims for the independence of opinions even vis-a-vis those of the Prophet and the attitude of God in reasoning with people, while at the same time he approved of the traditional concept of imitation prevalent in Shiism (Shariati 1976b, 13; 27-28).¹¹

¹⁰ As we will see below this contradiction constitutes the core of Shariati's political theory.

¹¹ It is significant that at some point in his thought, perhaps as a result of the sub textual contradictions in his discourse, Shariati toyed with the idea of a more "pure" type of humanism, an "Eastern humanism" derived from the Abrahamic Tradition of the story of Adam (Shariati c1972a, 209).

Collectivist Subjectivity: Overlap With Marxism

As I have tried to demonstrate above so far, Shariati's discourse attributed a type of conditional subjectivity to human beings. In some parts of his discourse Shariati explicitly addressed human subjectivity in terms of agency. He used the phrase "*Ellat-e Fa'eli*," literally meaning the "Active Cause" to refer to human agency. However, his notion of agency did not refer to the individual but the collectivity. He wrote,

In the Quran, the "Messenger" is not considered as the agent [*Ellat-e Fa'eli*] of basic changes in history. Rather he is introduced as the carrier of the message who has to show the true path to the people and his mission ends at that point. It is then up to the people whether to choose or not to choose this message and truth and there are not "accidents" possible in this religion since everything is in the hands of God. In general, the audiences of every creed and religion are the principal agent of change in their community and because of that we see the Quran always addresses the "people" [*nas*]. The prophet is appointed for the people, he talks to the people, he is questioned by the people. The causes of progress, change and decline are the people and people are responsible for history and society (Shariati 1968, 13).

Based on above observation Shariati concluded that Islam was the first social philosophy which considered the people, and not the elite or the "great individuals," as the principle agent of history and directly responsible for their society (Shariati 1968, 15). Shariati placed much emphasis on this issue in his discourse that thematically he equated "the people" with the notion of God. To be certain, he

emphasized, theologically speaking, the idea of equating people with God would be blasphemous. But in the social context, "we can always substitute the people for God," since otherwise the Quranic injunction to give God interest free loans, for example, does not make any sense (Shariati 1994, 153). In this scheme of equating people with God, however, Shariati saw to it that by "the people" he meant the collectivity by opposing the latter to the individual (Shariati 1994, 227-28; c1972, 93-94). Shariati's notion of mediated subjectivity of the collectivity is captured in his definition of the "Perfect Man," a reinterpretation of a similar notion among the medieval Islamic philosophers,

[A Perfect Man] is a man who has not been rendered one dimensional, broken, defective and self-estranged by life. By submitting to God, he has been liberated from all submissions; by surrendering to His absolute will he has rebelled against all tyranny. The Perfect Man is one who has immersed his ephemeral "individuality" in "eternity of human collectivity" and by negating his "self" he became enduring (Shariati c1972a, 101-102).

Shariati's emphasis on the collectivity was undoubtedly rooted in the Islamic universalistic principals and he interpreted them as vehicles for the empowerment of the "disempowered". The latter term, the "disempowered" or *mustaza'fin* is a Quranic concept in which Shariati and Khomeini alike, as we will see below, invested much political and rhetorical capital. By the disempowered Shariati meant the majority of population who has been the target of a multidimensional process of "marginalization." Each and every

dimension of this marginalization, ranging from economic exploitation, political despotism, to colonization of nations and cultural and religious suffocation, has been operating in various configurations in history. It is to the "salvation," of this class of people and the elimination of "disempowerment" in this world, Shariati contended, that the discourse of the Quran is directed and that is the reason why the message of the Quran is always fresh (Shariati 1975, 1). This reflects Shariati's correct understanding of the dynamics of social change which has to mobilize and affect the lives of the social universal. For this reason, for example, he correctly attributed the defeat of the social movement that Afghani wanted to create, to the latter's failure to ground it in the majority (Shariati c1972a, 250).

However, the same concern with the social universal as a collective entity caused Shariati to reject, for the most part, notions of individuality or liberal democracy. As a result he attacked the idea of the individual and civil freedom on the grounds that they merely provide a license to indulge in "immoral" and criminal activities (Shariati 1979b, 157). Moreover, Shariati contended, the only people who benefit from these freedoms are those with money and power and not the ordinary citizen (Shariati 1979b, 157). He interpreted the Quranic concept of *Isar* (Altruism) as the "death of the individual" so that the "other" may simply live (Shariati 1972a, 61).¹²

12 Shariati dismissed the criticisms of his anti-liberal ideas as an "irrelevant parliamentarism" espoused by liberal intellectuals who do not understand and share the sufferings of the people (Shariati 1979b, 48).

Despite Shariati's antipathy toward the individual as the carrier of this subjectivity, the logic of his own metaphysics seems to have forced him at times to reluctantly recognize the inevitability of the individual in any scheme involving human subjectivity. Indeed in some of his writings he seems to have waged a theoretical struggle to suppress that emergence of the individual as the carrier of his mediated and inchoate subjectivity. The most compelling reason forcing him to recognize the centrality of individual subjectivity is the pivotal role he ascribed to the concept of human responsibility and its political cognate social commitment. He realized that the concept of responsibility can not have any meaning without the individual as the subject. This strong logic forced him to assert that,

When my "I" is absolutely negated and my "self" is lost, the sense of responsibility in my feelings and actions is meaningless, and when you tell the individual you are merely a fruit of your society and acquired all your shape, color and even your being from your environment, naturally he would not develop a sense of being responsible for his attributes and actions (Shariati c1972a, 373-74).

One of the themes that emerges fairly regularly in Shariati's discourse is that of human "alienation". As I mentioned before he described several types of alienation caused by categories such as of "mechanization", bureaucracy, money, civilization, society, etc.. In another work he elaborated on a different concept of alienation of the individual by the society which he designated as "sociologism," in French transliteration (Shariati c1980 , 119). He again came to the

conclusion that in the Quran the individual is recognized as the very foundation of the notion of responsibility (Shariati c1981, 150-51).

One escape route from this dilemma in which Shariati seems to have found himself stranded was the possibility of two levels of "individualism," i.e., a philosophical individualism of which he approved and a moral/practical individualism which he disavowed (Shariati c1972a, 390-98). But as if even this did not satisfy him, he returned to the idea of sacrificing the individual at the altar of the collectivity which he identified with "authenticity" (Shariati c1972a, 397-401).

His brief and "forced" discussion of individual subjectivity notwithstanding, Shariati developed rather complicated relations with Marxist theory in his discourse. While he rejected the Marxian reduction of subjectivity to labor, he located his mediated subjectivity in a close parallel to the Marxist view, in the collectivity. The interesting twist enabled him to reject the Marxist historical determinism based on the autonomous evolution of forces of production, but return to teleological historicism of evolutionary stages of history, similar to but, different from, Marxian teleology. As we saw before, Shariati grounded his brand of subjectivity not in consciousness but the cognate concepts of faith and conviction as components of the ideology for revolutionary praxis. Consequently, he could not hold labor as the grounding of his notion of subjectivity and on different occasions he rejected this Marxian notion. But in the meantime, he shared the Marxian primacy of collectivity. Thus in Shariati's philosophy of history it was not the labor based evolution of the productive forces that constituted the "base" of society. Rather

it was the "form of ownership," whether it was collective and communal or individual which determined the nature of a socioeconomic formation and thereby, the movement of history (Shariati 1977c, 18). This formulation enabled Shariati to simplify the stages of socio-economic formation to two stages. One was a society in which all resources, means of production, consumption materials and social amenities are available to the public equally as in the form of "primitive communism." In the second type of social formation, these resources are monopolized by individuals and the public is deprived (Shariati 1979c, 18). Class struggle is the obvious result of the second type of society, according to Shariati, and the telos of history is to return to the communal ownership but in a "higher" form.

Shariati idealized the purported "primitive communism" of the pre-agrarian society in which the individual and private ownership did not exist (Shariati c1972a, 72-74). Apparently he did not realize the discrepancy between this view of historical development and his ontology involving a flight away from nature. This inconsistency can be explained if, as Hamid Dabashi has repeatedly pointed out, we keep in mind that Shariati was primarily an ideologue concerned with promoting an ideology for a particular social movement (Dabashi 1993). Shariati attempted to juxtapose his stages of socioeconomic formations on a paralleled continuum of "socio-religious" formations. Thus he viewed "totemism" as a primitive form of monotheism (*tohid*) in which the unified identity of the tribe is represented in the collectivity against the individual (Shariati c1972a, 178-79). With the advent if the agricultural society and the

emergence of individual ownership, first of land and then expanding to other resources, this "monotheism" of totemism is destroyed and the era of "polytheism" (*shirk*) in which the existence of different deities correspond to different social classes, groups and races, is ushered in (Shariati 1972a , 287-88). This is the stage in which class struggle, epitomized in the story of Abel and Cain --Abel representing the "disempowered" and "people" and Cain representing the "monopolizer"-- moves history to a higher stage of monotheism. The stage of monotheism of which Islam is the pinnacle follows the polytheism of class society and its goal is to launch a classless and unified society based on the worship of a single deity (Shariati c1972a, 287-88).

Political Theory: Committed Guidance

Shariati's political philosophy betrays a close affinity to his ontological views. As we saw earlier his metaphysics was informed by an ontological movement, or what I have termed journey, from our "lowly" base in nature and matter to the realm of perfection akin to that of the Divinity. And for him the "perfection" of society was the embodiment of this movement. He used the Islamic term *Ommat* (in original Arabic *Umma*), to convey this notion. *Ommat* in Islamic tradition means the larger Islamic community of believers, the sole basis of which, at least in theory if not practice, is the faith of the members. *Ommat* developed early in the Islamic history as the larger community of believers in large part to transcend the tribal structure of Pre-Islamic Arabia, and as such may usually be interpreted in contrast to the "modern" notion of nation-state. But

Shariati did not focus on this issue in the concept of *Ommat* and instead emphasized what he viewed as the "becoming" and movement of society toward a putative perfection,

Ommat is comprised of a collectivity in which the members, under a great and sublime leadership, feel the responsibility for the progress and perfection of the society in their blood and life and with their convictions. They are committed to a view of life, not as "being," the comfortable stagnation of existing, but as "becoming" and moving toward absolute perfection, absolute self-consciousness and the constant creation of sublime values... [This is the meaning of the Quranic verse] "we are from God and to God we return" (Shariati 1979b, 50-51).

For such an ideal community to achieve its goal of transcendence, Shariati contended, a leadership is necessary and he called this leadership *Imamat*. Traditionally the concept of *Imamat*, literally meaning leadership in Arabic, has been used in Shiism to designate the leadership of the Shi'i community after the prophet by his descendants through Ali and his daughter Fatima and opposed to the Sunni institution of Caliphate. But Shariati, claiming a semantic relationship between the term *Ommat* and *Imamat* defined the latter as the leadership of the community in pursuit of his ontological goal,

Ommat is a community in the process of "moving" and "becoming" toward absolute transcendence. Since now we understand *Ommat* we can easily find a clear definition for *Imamat* and its social role. Accordingly, *Imamat* is the leadership that guides the *Ommat* in this movement (Shariati 1979b, 52).

On the basis of those premises, Shariati distinguished between two types of polity. For the first type of polity, found in the modern West he used the term "*politique*" in French transliteration. By this Shariati meant a community in which the civil society rules and the state merely "administers" its affairs. For the second type of polity, corresponding to his conceptualization of *Ommat*, he chose "*sliyasat*," a Perso-Arabic term meaning politics but with connotations of pedagogy and guidance. In the *politique*, Shariati complained, the leadership has no responsibility to undertake any social reform, or to ameliorate the public's consciousness so that the youth can be improved in their thinking and immoral people become moral. These are not within the sphere of the responsibilities of the state (Shariati 1979b, 42-43). But in the East where *siyasat* is the epitome of polity, it is the responsibility of the government to transform people's moral, mental and social conditions from what they "are" to what they "ought" to be (Shariati 1979b, 42-43). This mode of thinking led Shariati to assert that the leader of *Ommat*,

Unlike the president of the United States, or the host of a radio talk show, is not committed to act according to the wishes of his constituency. He is not committed to providing the maximum of happiness and gratification for members of society. Rather he must lead the society, by the fastest, shortest, and the most straight route, toward perfection, even though this perfection may cause pain for the members.. a point that needless to say, they have consciously accepted and is not imposed on them (Shariati 1979b, 66).

The pedagogic element in Shariati's conceptualization of polity led him to invoke images of children in need of "kindergarten"

(*kudakestan*) to describe the citizens of Iran (Shariati 1979b, 41). Even worse, he re-invoked the concept of the "sheep" in need of leadership, thereby reducing the autonomous subject as citizen back to the *ra'iyat* (literally sheep) of the Qajar period. Thus Shariati's notion of "committed guidance" (*rahbari moteahed*) as he called his idea of leadership, negated the possibility of popular sovereignty, at least for a few generations to come, even though he did not totally dismiss the possibility of a democratic system. He wrote,

The principal of democratic government, in contrast to the sacrosanct exhilaration that this word carries, is opposed to the principle of revolutionary change and spiritual guidance. In a society in which political leadership is based on a particular ideology and its agenda is the transformation of corrupt and putrid traditions, the leadership (government) cannot be based on the views and wishes of the public; the government cannot stem from the degenerative masses (Shariati 1979b, 153).

For a country like Iran, Shariati prescribed a combination of charismatic leader and a leader "selected" by people but not responsible to them. In his book Ommat va Immamat he focused on the idea of a charismatic leader as the Imam who is neither appointed, elected nor even designated by the prophet (Shariati 1979b, 122-123). The right to be the leader, Shariati asserted, "is an innate right, inhering in the essential quality of the leader and not in external factors of 'election' or 'appointment'" (Shariati 1979b, 124). In contrast to a democratic polity, in a "regime of guidance" people do not elect their leaders, they merely recognize them (Shariati 1979b, 125-126). In the absence of a charismatic leader, the leader

may not be elected by popular vote, but "selected" by the "experts" who are trusted by people and he would not be responsible to the populace, but to "principles of guidance" according to which he has to move the society towards its higher goals (Shariati 1976b, 14-15).

In the book Ommat va Immamat, which contains most of his thoughts on the issue, Shariati grounded his arguments against popular sovereignty in the historical context of the cases of succession following the death of the prophet and the emergence of Shiism. Therefore, Shariati and later his followers could argue that his anti-democratic thought had merely a historical significance and had nothing to do with our time. To be sure Shariati did not completely dismiss the possibility of a participatory and democratic polity, even though he did not elaborately discuss this theme. For example, in his influential book, Safavid Shiism and Alavid Shiism, he briefly mentioned that the Islamic polity after the prophet and the 12 Shi'i Imams should be grounded in popular sovereignty based on the two Islamic principles of "consultation" (*Shura*) and consensus (*ijma'*) (Shariati 1971b, 258; 274). Indeed, as I have been trying to demonstrate, Shariati's discourse contains both elements-- elements that are against the notion of popular sovereignty and citizenship rights and those that are in favor of them. What is crucial to understand about Shariati and other Islamic figures discussed this chapter is that they played a "parturient" role in Iranian history and their significance lies in the fact that their message reached a large number of Iranians which can potentially lay the foundation of a colossal social change in that country.

The significance of Shariati and his discourse for Iranian history may symbolically be understood by his references to his intentions of bringing forth an "Islamic Protestantism." By Islamic Protestantism he meant the idea of using religion itself to reform religion and culture on a large scale. As a result, Shariati introduced an elemental form of subjectivity, albeit inchoate and collectivist in nature, to a large number of Iranians hitherto not much affected by the revolution of subjectivity in modernity.

Ayatollah Khomeini: The Ascetic Revolutionary as the Subject

Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1988) was born into a traditionally religious family in the small town of Khomeini located about sixty miles southwest of Tehran. His grandfather had been a merchant in Kashmir, hence the accusation that he was not an Iranian. A few months after Khomeini was born his father died and he was raised by his mother and paternal aunt until age 15 when he lost both of them. It is said that his aunt had been specially strong-willed woman (Dabashi 1993, 410). After the loss of his mother and aunt, his elder brother, Ayatollah Pasandideh, undertook his upbringing and an early and basic education in traditional Islamic sciences. At age 19, Khomeini went to the nearby town of Arak to study under the prominent Ayatollah Haeri and after that followed him to the city of Qom. By 1926, Khomeini had already accomplished his advanced study of Islamic jurisprudence and the Canonical Law of Shii sources (Dabashi 1993, 410). It is important to note that while pursuing his traditional studies of Shii jurisprudence, Khomeini was also studying

Islamic philosophy and mystical tradition, a relatively rare pursuit among the orthodox. Moreover, when Khomeini begun to teach at the age of 27, his primary interest was also Islamic mysticism and philosophy (Dabashi 1993, 410). Khomeini's major debut in politics came in 1944, with the publication of his book *Kashf al Asrar* or Secrets Unveiled. In this book he assailed not only the "modernity" of Kasravi and his followers, but also the dictatorship of Reza Shah who by then had been forced to abdicate in favor of his son for nearly three years. After this episode Khomeini seems to have led a politically quiet life, under the Shadow of the eminent Ayatollah Boroujerdi (d. 1961). During this period Khomeini was intensely involved in teaching in Qom, gathering a sizable following among the seminary students. Especially popular among his classes had been a course on ethics, well attended by young students who found in this course the unusual means of self-control (Mottahedeh 1985, 242). Khomeini's reentry into the political arena was after the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi in 1961.

In June 1963, on the occasions of the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in A.D., the most emotionally charged day of the year in the Shi'i community, Khomeini unleashed his verbal attacks on the regime of the Shah for the raid on the seminary school in Qom a few weeks earlier where some students had been killed. This was followed by Khomeini's arrest in two days and widespread riots in different towns which were bloodily suppressed by the regime's armed forces. Khomeini was under arrest in Teheran but was released after a few months. However, soon in 1964, there was another occasion which provided Khomeini with ammunition to

attack the Shah's regime. In the autumn of 1964, the US government implicitly tied the granting of a large economic loan to the granting of diplomatic immunity for its military personnel and dependents in Iran, a non-reciprocal measure, encroaching, at least symbolically, on Iran's sovereignty. The parliament, relatively reluctantly, approved the American bill. Khomeini found the situation explosive and delivered a fiery speech in which he said, "If the Shah should run over an American dog, he would be called to account but if an American cook should run over the Shah, no one has any claim against him..." (Mottahedeh 1985, 246). This action on the part of Khomeini immediately caused his exile, first to Turkey and within a year to the Shii holy city of Najaf in Iraq, a strategic triumph for Khomeini since in Najaf he had access to the vast religious, economic and political resources of the Shii community outside and inside Iran, from a safe distance afar. In exile, Khomeini gradually built up his revolutionary discourse against monarchy in Iran, the West, imperialism, Zionism and Israel, until his triumphant return to Iran in early days of 1979, to lead the revolution against the monarchy and establish the new Islamic Republic. In the meantime by early 1970s Khomeini brought to completion his concept of the "Governance of the Jurist" (*Velayat-e Faqih*) and published a book under the same title in which he delineated his theory of a theocratic state in terms of Shii doctrinal beliefs. In the last thirty five years of his life, Ayatollah Khomeini's works and actions changed the lives and consciousness of millions of Iranians of all walks of life, but especially those of what he and Shariati called, the *mostaza'fin*, the "disempowered".

Refinement from Above and the Move onto the Spiritual Sphere

In his ontological reflections, Khomeini, in a similar manner to Shariati, posited a move from the material sphere to the spiritual realm to be accomplished both by the individual and society. Islam, he argued, had provided the most effective means to achieve those goals, but early in its history Islam was engulfed by the Jews and their cultural intrigues and intellectual distortions (Khomeini 1978, 6-7). Moreover, Khomeini contended, the same destructive forces were aimed at Islamic culture by the Crusaders and later in the past three hundred years by the colonialists who have tried to neutralize Islam as a cultural force because it obstructed their economic and political aims (Khomeini 1978, 7-19). In recent history, however, the external enemies of Islam and Iran were not alone in their aim of destroying Islam. They were greatly aided by the "internal elements," that is the secular intellectuals, who had "lost" their "selves" in the face of the cultural onslaught of the West (Khomeini 1978, 19). Using the terminology that may be traced back to Al Ahmad, Khomeini integrated his concept of "self loss" (*khud bakhtegi*) in his discourse to describe the Iranians' loss of their authenticity.¹³

The mechanism by which the "self" was lost and the state of "inauthenticity" was perpetuated, Khomeini believed, was the separation between religion and politics beginning in the early stages of Islam and continued in our own time at the hands of imperialists

¹³ It is reported that had read Al Ahmad's famous book Westoxication and admired it. See Mottahedeh 1985, 303.

(Khomeini 1978, 23). Accordingly, he concluded that the establishment of the theocratic state, to enforce the laws of Islam, was the most reasonable means of fulfilling the frustrated goals of Islam. However, Islam views the law as an instrument, Khomeini maintained, to realize justice in society in order to bring about moral reform and refinement of human beings,

Islam views the law instrumentally, that is it regards the laws[sic] as an instrument to realize justice, an instrument for doctrinal and moral reform and refinement of man. The law exists for the establishing and enforcement of a just social order [as a necessary condition] for the development of refined [*mohazab*] men (Khomeini 1978, 95).

The interest in the moral development of the "masses" was apparent in Khomeini's discourse as early as 1940s, when in his book Secrets Unveiled, he responded to the Kasravite brand of modernity that only religion is capable of transcending the materialist culture of modern times (Khomeini c1979a [1944], 276).

Khomeini's views on the goal of the development of "refined man" rested on a set of metaphysical assumptions which were not too different from those of Shariati and, as we will see next, Motahhari. In fact, drawing on Islamic Gnostic tradition, Khomeini often expressed what I called the "journey toward subjectivity" in Shariati, in terms of agape, an attraction or love toward the Divine,

Man has certain properties which are not present in any other being. One such property is the desire for absolute power and not limited power; absolute perfection and not limited perfection . And since absolute power and

perfection are realized in none other than God, man by nature seeks God and he is not aware of it... [Those who seek worldly power and perfection] do not understand that in all beings the attraction to absolute perfection is the love of God and the tragedy is that we do not understand and mistake one for the other (Khomeini 1981, 76-78).

In a similar vein to Shariati, Khomeini also perceived a movement away from nature toward a higher plateau. In a mystical exegesis of the first chapter of the Quran he wrote,

Worship and prayer are also means to... the end of eliciting the true nature of man and making it manifest, of bringing it forth from potentially into actuality. Natural man should become divine; whatever he looks at he will see as God. All the prophets were sent to assist man to attain this goal (Khomeini 1981b, 415).

Just as it was the case with Shariati, the upshot of Khomeini's prescribed ontological migration away from nature also ends not in the self-realization of the subject but in the annihilation of the potential subject (Khomeini 1981b, 383-84). Just like Shariati, he also utilizes a "hydraulic" image, not the river and the ocean as Shariati did, but the "drop and the ocean" or the "wave and the ocean" (Khomeini 1981b, 396; 406). Thus Khomeini's partially subjectivist ontology manifested in his notion of migration to a higher plateau is simultaneously contravened by an opposite trend rooted within the very same ontological system. Khomeini believed in a very "creationist" view wherein beings are brought into existence by "something external to them" (Khomeini 1981b, 367-

368). While Khomeini implicitly rejected any panentheistic interpretation of existence, he did not absolutely deny the possession of subjectivity by humans by made it contingent upon the Subjectivity of the Supreme Essence: "beings that are subordinate to the Supreme Name also possesses perfection, but to an inferior degree, one limited by their inherent capacity" (Khomeini 1981b, 369). Thus, this ontological contrariety of positing potential human subjectivity and negating it at the same time, constituted the core of "mediated subjectivity" in Khomeini also. Yet the full extent of mediated subjectivity in Khomeini was played out in the context of his discussion around the problem of theodicy.

Mediated Subjectivity and the Problem of Theodicy

Khomeini's discussion of the limited, conditional and contingent character of human subjectivity took place in the context of his analysis of the problem of theodicy and related issues of human freedom (*ekhtiyar*) and predestination (*jabr*). The question of theodicy or "Divine Justice," has been a thorny problem in many religious systems. Weber attributed much sociological importance to it in his writings on religion. Briefly, theodicy as a problem refers to the notion of the existence of imperfection and evil in the world in the face of the omnipotent Divine Will who is assumed to be just (Weber 1964, 138-39). In the process of solving the problem of theodicy, which historically has been attempted in many different ways, there may arise a human will which is simultaneously independent from and dependent upon that of the Divinity. This paradox constitutes the cornerstone of what I have designated as

mediated subjectivity in religious thinkers such as Khomeini and Motahhari and accounts for their constant vacillation between the opposite poles of positing human subjectivity and then negating it.

In his theology, as compared to his sociology, Khomeini was conservative. He does not seem to have invoked the notion of "God's vicegerent on earth" for ordinary human beings.¹⁴ As early as 1944, in response to the criticism of the followers of Kasravi for interpreting the Quranic verse to mean the negation of human agency and volition, Khomeini acknowledged human agency and only posited the "support" of God as having an influence on human actions. He maintained that human mind has such a capacity to enable us to choose between good and evil, but he immediately qualified his statement by asserting that human freedom is within the framework of Divine Determinations (*Taqdirat-e Ellahi*) (Khomeini c1979[1944] , 48).¹⁵ As such the paradox of theodicy constitutes the context in which Khomeini's discourse on human agency and volition is discussed. Since there is evil in this world and since God is just, the existence of evil cannot have been willed by Him. This may mean that God's will has set into motion certain "laws" which are later independent from His original will and within that context, evil , as well as human volition, can take place without any damage to the concept of God's justice. Khomeini attributed this

¹⁴ He seems to have reserved the concept of "God's vicegerency on the earth" only for the Prophet and not for ordinary humans as other Islamists of his time did. See Khomeini 1978, 54.

¹⁵ In constructing this notion of contingent human agency, Khomeini was also responding to the Kasravi's criticisms of "apparent changes in God's will", or *Bida*, a classical paradox discussed in Islamic theology. See Khomeini c1979[1944] , 83-89.

deistic position to the famous "rationalist" medieval theologians in Islamic history known as the Mu'tazalites, and for obvious reasons rejected it (Khomeini 1983a, 59). The opposite position, that of rejection of human agency and volition as well as the judgment of God's justice by human standards, Khomeini attributed to the Asha'rites, the opponents of the Mu'tazalites. Khomeini rejected the positions of both schools of thought by opting for a famous third position known in Islamic Philosophy as a "position between positions" (*amri bain al amrain*). This meant that for Khomeini humans are neither devoid of subjectivity and agency, nor are they fully in possession of them, rather a position in between,

Freedom ... implying that beings may be independent in their agency and being created.. and necessity, implying the denial of all effects attributed to any entity other than God and claiming that God directly organizes and effects everything, are both impossible. Therefore, the true position is a position in between. This means that creatures [i.e., humans] are "effective possibilities" [*emkan-e moaser*] and capable of causality [*elliyat*] but not immediately and independently. In all the universe there are no immediate agents [*fa'el mostaqel*] except the sublime God. And all beings, as they are not independent in the essences, in their actions and attributes they are not independent either. These beings [i.e., humans] have certain attributes, and effect certain actions and achieve certain deeds but not independently (Khomeini 1983, 73).

By adopting this position, which captures the essence of mediated subjectivity in Khomeini's discourse, he was able to find a solution to the problem of theodicy as well as respond to the modernist

pressures for human agency without encroaching upon Divine Subjectivity.¹⁶

Although, because of the position of mediated subjectivity, Khomeini very much like Shariati, vacillated between upholding human agency and denying it at the same time, but owing to his theological conservatism, he had a greater tendency toward negating it. In the abstraction of pure theology he could not admit any type of existential independence for humans. In the more abstract sections of his book *Talab va Eradeh (Desire and Will)* he considered human existence "in-another" and not "in-itself" (Khomeini 1983a, 62-63). In this context, he also cited those verses of the Quran which deny the direct subjectivity of humans (Khomeini 1983a, 85). But in the more concrete context involving human volitive capacity, Khomeini attempted a reconciliation,

Man, therefore, while he is a free agent [*fa'el mokhtar*], he himself is the shadow of the Free Agent and his agency a shadow of the Sublime God's Agency.. In brief, even though God's will is applied to the Most Perfect Order [*Nazm-e Attam*, i.e., the universe], it is in no conflict with man being a free agent, as the Divine transcendental knowledge which is the origin of the universe, is in no conflict with human freedom and in reality confirms it (Khomeini 1983a, 129).

Khomeini's subscription to the ethics of responsibility compelled him to recognize human freedom and subjectivity. We have to choose between good and evil, between "prosperity" and "adversity"

¹⁶ Khomeini's resolution of the paradox of theodicy attributed all good to the Divine source and all evil emanating from human action (Khomeini 1983a, 80). By adopting the "position between positions" he also claimed to have justice to the "rights" of both God and humans at the same time (Khomeini 1983a, 77).

(*sa'adat va shaqavat*) by choosing correct beliefs and practices (Khomeini 1983a, 140). As a result, Khomeini dismissed the notion of human "nature" (*seresht*) and predetermined character (Khomeini 1983a, 142). Those born with "good" or "evil" natures are equally free to choose their deeds and equally responsible (Khomeini 1983a, 148-49). This more positive side of Khomeini's cosmology led him to interpret Islam as a religion of action and activism, and also militarism. Throughout his career Khomeini stressed that Islam is a religion of action, movement against oppression. Moreover, as early as 1944, he discussed the promotion of martial skills in Islam, even betting on horse racing and shooting competitions (Khomeini c1979[1944], 244-45). During the revolution and even after, Khomeini made a clear connection between human "dignity" and a militarist subjectivity. In an address on the occasion of the Iranian new year on March 21, 1980, he said,

Beloved youth, it is in you that I place my hopes. With the Quran in one hand and a gun in the other, defend your dignity and honor so well that your adversaries will be unable even to think of conspiring against you. At the same time, be so compassionate toward your friends that you will not hesitate to sacrifice everything you possess for their sake. Know well that the world today belongs to the oppressed, and sooner or later they will triumph. They will inherit the earth and build the government of God (Khomeini, 1981b, 287).

In line with this activist interpretation of Islam, Khomeini de-emphasized the purely devotional aspects of religion and highlighted the practical-political aspects. As early as *Kashf al-Asar*, he was

emphasizing that "the ratio of the social issues to the devotional verses in the Quran is more than one hundred to one" (Khomeini c1979[1944], 9). He even used the notion of becoming a "subject" by evoking the concept of becoming an "*adam*" that a hundred years before him the secularist Malkum Khan had coined. He admonished passive piety by claiming that, the imperialists are not concerned how fastidiously Muslims observe rituals such as daily prayers. The imperialists are after the mineral deposits and markets hence they fear if Iranians become *adam* (Khomeini c1979[1944] 24-25). During the days of the revolution he went as far as saying that the political demonstrations aimed at the breaking down of despotism, and as advancement of the cause of God, is a form of worship (Khomeini 1981b, 234). All in all Khomeini's notion of subjectivity, like that of the other two figures discussed in this chapter, attempted to find liberation through submission. In his message to the pilgrims, he exhorted his followers, "to convey to all Muslims in all continents of the globe this message from God: 'Refuse all servitude except servitude to God'" (Khomeini 1981b, 276). In order to achieve this liberation Khomeini had proposed the training of seminary students (*talabehs*) and politicized clergy as what can be imagined as "ascetic revolutionaries."

Ascetic Revolutionarism: A Moment of Mediated Subjectivity

Early in his career, Khomeini addressed the clerics with a penchant for political activity and especially young clerical students among them. In these strata, he sought potential political revolutionaries to lead the people. But before they could assume

such a role they had to go through a process of "self-cleansing" (*tazkieh*) and refinement. In a book entitled The Greatest Jihad: The Struggle Against the Self (*Mobarezeh ba Nanfs ya Jahad-e Akbar*) published in 1973 in Najaf Iraq, the Ayatollah urged his followers, especially the young ones, to embark on a path of self refinement, self-discipline and organizational reform in the seminary systems to check the onslaught of imperialism. This self-refinement was meant to be conducive to the training and development of a class of "subjects" as Khomeini invoked Malkum Khan's image of "subjectivity" in the concept of an *adam*, since imperialism could only be expelled by the *adams* (Khomeini 1973, 89).

The achievements of the status of being an *adam*, in Khomeini's thought, hinged upon the control and regulation of the "natural" self and the inner nature. The strengthening of the will could only be attained by the total denial of the body. In a sermon, apparently delivered during the fasting month of Ramadan, Khomeini urged the young seminary students to exert their wills on their bodily organs (Khomeini 1973, 64). Furthermore, he told his clerical audience, attractions toward (inner) nature was the cause of neglecting self-refinement,

One whose entire attention is toward the realm of nature is in diversion from God and unaware of the spiritual sphere and the world beyond. He is relapsing into nature and has never embarked on self-refinement; he has failed to create a spiritual movement and vigor in himself. He has not lifted the dark veils from his heart and remains in "the lowest of the low" [*asfal al safelin*], whereas, God has created man in the loftiest status... (Khomeini 1973, 1-2).

In this passage we can again see the emphasis on distancing from nature, inner nature specifically, in the process of making of the subject, this time as the revolutionist. From the earliest time in his political career, Khomeini assailed the importance of modern Western culture and its putative relaxed sexual mores as the cause of the destruction of revolutionary and activist qualities among Iranian youth. In his *Kashf al Asrar*, he complained how the spread of European novels has made the masses disinterested in religious books and how the Europeans with their "special skills" and ill intentions through the dissemination of these types of literature, have robed Iranian youth of their spirit or audacity, courage and chivalry and replaced them with the spirit of philandering, inconstancy, and cheating (Khomeini c1979 [1944], 121). Even music, the unveiling of women and co-ed schools, he added, have had the same dampening effects on the culture and must be banned (Khomeini c1979 [1944], 213-214).

It is significant that in his early writings, Khomeini opposed the spread of this "corrupt" culture in the name of the "rationality" which Kasravi and his followers were advocating (Khomeini 1979 [1944], 232). But this concept of ascetic "rationality" has been a recurrent theme in Khomeini's discourse and much effort has been expended to institutionalize it after the revolution. In one of his first major public addresses on Feb. 2, 1979, after he set foot on the Iranian soil after 15 years of exile, Khomeini reiterated this theme,

We are not opposed to the cinema, to radio, or to television; what we oppose is vice and the use of the media to keep our

young people in a state of backwardness and dissipate their energies. We have never opposed these feature of modernity in themselves, but when they were brought from Europe to the East, particularly to Iran, unfortunately they were used not in order to advance civilization, but in order to drag us into barbarism. The cinema is a modern invention that ought to be used for the sake of educating the people, but as you know, it was used instead to corrupt our youth (Khomeini 1981b, 258).

Khomeini's criticism of the "corruption" of culture is conducive to the valuation of a particular type of "consciousness" which corresponds to his version of mediated subjectivity and conception of revolutionarism.. Since his early writings, he had emphasized the notion of "awakeness" (*bidari*) as political awareness.¹⁷ Khomeini's stress on political consciousness, however, was but a means to achieve praxis. He repeatedly emphasized that the Prophet's mission, unlike what has been falsely attributed to Christ, was not merely to promulgate laws but to put them into practice (Khomeini, 1978, 90). Moreover, on numerous occasions, the ayatollah criticized the purported depoliticization of seminaries and religious establishments as an imperialist ploy to dominate Islamic lands and peoples. He urged the Mullahs to be socially and politically active and as we will see below, take the reign of politics in their hands, for which they must prepare themselves through practices of self-cleansing. In Khomeini's discourse, parallel to the training of

¹⁷ In a speech delivered after the revolution, Khomeini grounded this notion of politicized awareness on the medieval Islamic philosopher's concept of "consciousness" or "yaqzan", literally meaning "awakeness" which reveals his deep philosophical penchant .See Khomeini 1983b, 591.

revolutionists, there was a similar approach to apply ascetic measures to the "masses" for their "refinement," on the road to subjectivity. In his discourse, the two parallel notions of ascetic revolutionarism for the few and refinement from above for the "masses" converged in an all important concept of what he called the "Governance of the Jurist" which constitutes the very negation of universal subjectivity and popular sovereignty.

Governance of the Jurist: Negation of Universal Subjectivity

Khomeini's ideas on the establishment of a theocratic state in which the clerics would take over the reins of political rule on behalf of the Hidden Imam whose divine mandate he believed was delegated to them, was the result of a long process of development in his discourse. His ideas on the subject came to fruition in the book entitled *Velayat-e Faqih* (Governance of the Jurist), first published in early 1970s in a limited edition. But later it became famous and concepts associated with the title came to constitute one of the pillars of the Islamic regime in Iran. In Arabic the term *wilaya*, the Persianized form of which is *velayat*, has many different meanings, including, to be in charge, manage, run, administer, govern and rule. It may also mean the sovereign power, sovereignty, rule, government and mandate. *Faqih* on the other hand means the Islamic jurist or jurisconsult and plural term *fuqaha* refers to a class of clergy with expertise in Islamic law and jurisprudence. By choosing this title, Khomeini meant to convey two messages. One was that political rule and government, in the absence of direct divine revelation or inspiration through the prophet or the Imams

respectively, would devolve to the Islamic jurists and among them to the highest Juridical authority. The other message was that the people are much in need of a caretaker, just as much as children need a custodian, to oversee their moral development and refinement.

As early as 1944, in his Secrets Unveiled, Khomeini had more or less explicitly allude to the concept of the Governance of the Jurist. But it was only in the early 1970s, that as a result of his resolve to oppose the Pahlavi regime and the latter's intransigence, that the idea came to its full development. In Governance of the Jurist, Khomeini argued that power and authority are necessary to prevent the invasion of the rights of others since individuals in the pursuit of their interests and happiness would oppress others. This is so because "people are imperfect and deficient and in need of perfection; in addition, they are different and have diverse inclination and disparate conditions" (Khomeini 1978, 46-48). Thus he established the necessity of law and government for humans. In the Governance of the Jurist, However, Khomeini did not consider it necessary to establish the reasons for a theocratic government probably since he had done so in his 1944 book, the Secrets Unveiled. In this latter book he argued that "reason" rules that government should belong only to "Him who owns everything" and "He who has the absolute right of disposal of His property". And since the only being who owns everything and who has absolute right of disposal is God, He and only He may establish a government the obedience of which is incumbent on every human being (Khomeini c1979[1944], 181-182). With the cessation of revelation

after the prophet and end of the period of the authority of the Imams, the Jurists must not only be in charge of juridical affairs but also of the political affairs and one among with the highest qualification of "justice" and knowledge of the Islamic law should assume the highest position of leadership. The political authority, but not the spiritual authority of this supreme jurist, Khomeini argued, was equal to that of the Prophet (Khomeini 1978, 63).

The most important implications of Khomeini's discourse on the concept of the Governance of the Jurist pertain to the sphere of positive law. As early as 1944 when the Secretes Unveiled was published, Khomeini had argued against the purported vacuity of human made law and that it could not compete with the divine law (Khomeini c1979 [1944], 312-13). One reason for the superiority of the divine law over the positive law, Khomeini argued, was that the former is truly universal at least in two senses. One was that since divine law is far above humans, the particular interests, be those of the rich in capitalist countries or the elite in communist countries have no place in the law of God (Khomeini c1979[1944], 290-91). Secondly, the universality of positive law is marred by its limitation of artificial geographic boundaries drawn by nation-states whereas, the religious law transcends these boundaries and covers all of humanity (Khomeini c1979[1944], 267). Throughout his discourse, the Ayatollah rejected the vision of legislation by humans on the grounds that since in the final analysis true consciousness and Justice is not within the realm of humans, they have no right to "forge" legislation. He even specified that "in Islamic government instead of a legislative assembly, which constitutes one of the branches of the

government, there is a programming assembly which draws up programs for different ministers... in the light laws of Islam" (Khomeini 1978, 53).¹⁸ In the same paragraph, Khomeini rejected the notion of popular sovereignty,

The Islamic government is neither absolutist nor despotic but conditional. Of course it is not conditional in the current sense that legislation would be contingent upon the views of the majority of individuals. It is conditional in the sense that in administration the rulers are bound by a set of conditions specified by the Quran and tradition of the Prophet... Herein lies the fundamental difference between Constitutional monarchs and republics on the one hand and the Islamic government: whereas, in those regimes the people's representatives or the King engage in legislation, in Islam legislation and the power to pass law exclusively belong to God (Khomeini 1978, 52-53).

In Khomeini's theoretical formulations on the state, the government has the duty to provide justice and order from above so that members of the community could go about their business with peace of mind. The government must also be a trustee of the people who would entrust their destiny to it, assured by its protection and its law (Khomeini 1978, 192). The implications of passivity and lack of participation in the social and political affairs of the community in this scheme are inevitable. Indeed Khomeini had stated that the Governance of the Jurist is the same as appointing a custodian for minors: "The custodian of the nation, with regard to duty and

¹⁸ This is despite the *de jure* provision for a Parliament in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic and the *de facto* existence of a very active parliament since the revolution of 1979.

position is no different from the custodian of the minors" (Khomeini 1978, 65).

Having said all that, it must be noted that Khomeini's discourse, owing to the contradictory nature of mediated subjectivity, could also accommodate a type of citizenship based on mass mobilization and participation which was required by the logic of revolution and the eight years of war against Iraq.

Mass Mobilization in Revolution and War: Participation and Citizenship

Most of Khomeini's thoughts on mass mobilization and participation were conveyed in his political writings or speeches rather than in his formal political treatises. But in a book such as the Governance of the Jurist, which is a political treatise as well as a tract, he urged the clerics to actively engage in the effort to mobilize people to overthrow the monarchical regime. He admonished the Mullahs to "mobilize the people, set them in motion and arouse them to fight for Islam in order to resolve the problems of the people" (Khomeini 1978, 181).

Khomeini's political success was in large part due to his ability to utilize the strong Islamic universalistic principles to create a sense of subjectivity, however limited and inchoate, among the social universal. In the course of the development of his discourse in the 1970s and during the revolution, he invested much political and intellectual capital in the notion of the "disempowered" or *mustaz'afin*, as Ali Shariati had done. On numerous occasions, the

Ayatollah repeated the theme of the empowerment of the oppressed and disempowered,

You [the disempowered] are in the right: the hand of God Almighty is with you, and it is His will that those who have been oppressed should assume leadership and become heirs to their own destiny and resources (Khomeini 1981b, 240).

Another topic that was thematized and sloganized by Khomeini during his period was the related idea of mass participation in politics, encoded in the phrase, "the ever presence of the people in the scenes" (*huzur-e hamishe-ye mardom dar sahneh-ha*). In his speeches and addresses during the revolution the Ayatollah often praised the participants in the demonstrations against the Pahlavi regime and encouraged them to remain "in the scene". He argued that if there were only one benefit deriving from the establishment of the Islamic Republic it would be the presence of the people in social and political scenes which was tantamount to a miracle not realized elsewhere (Khomeini 1985, 79). He even extrapolated the right of participation to women without whom, he admitted, the revolution would not have succeeded (Khomeini 1985, 99). At times he sounded as if the people by participating in the revolution have earned the rights to participate in the affairs of their own country. In a very significant speech to a large crowd gathered in Tehran's central cemetery on the occasion of his return from exile on February 2, 1979, Khomeini coupled the notion of revolutionary activism with the right of participation,

I ask God Almighty that he grants success to all of you, and I proclaim to all of you that it is our duty to continue this movement until all elements of Shah's regime have been eliminated and we have established a constituent assembly based on the votes of the people and the first permanent government of the Islamic Republic (Khomeini 1981, 259).

The mass participation in revolution and the war compelled the recognition of the responsibility of the state to the people. To be sure this responsibility did not include all spheres of social life, but in the area of politics the Islamic state felt that it was responsible to popular demands. For example, one could not claim certain personal freedoms, such as those pertaining to the dress code, especially for women, but members of the popular classes could express their political opinion more freely than before. In his colloquial style, Khomeini addressed the nation that, "If I set a foot wrong, the nation had duty to say that you have set your foot wrong, be watchful and restrain yourself. All the nation has the duty to oversee the affairs of Islam" (Khomeini 1981a, 149). Moreover, he congratulated the nation for a deep cultural change, that is the demand to participate in the affairs of the country. As a result of the revolution, he wrote,

There is a [new] consciousness that people are no longer afraid of tanks and artillery and they took to the streets. [Consequently] there is a spiritual revolution all over Iran; the people who would not think about the affairs of the country, the youth, the children, women and men, now discuss current affairs in their circles; before this was not so (Khomeini 1985, 61).

Women, Khomeini thought, must also take part in the essential affairs of the country. In one of his addresses to women, he said,

The laws of Islam are in the interest of women and men. Women must participate in the principle decisions of the country. As you played an essential role in the movement, now again you must share in the victory and do not forget that whenever necessary, rise up and revolt. The country belongs to you. God willing you must build the country. Women in early Islam participated with men in battles. We see that women side by side with men and even ahead of them are lined up in the battle... women must participate in their own destiny (Khomeini 1985, 139).¹⁹

The exigencies of the eight years of war against Iraq, which resulted in at least one million dead on the Iranian side alone, also served as a catalyst to manifest the militarist side of subjectivity in Khomeini's discourse,

When there is a war, mankind overcomes his languor and lassitude and becomes active as the human essence, which is to be moving and active, manifests itself. In rest and comfort

¹⁹ The Islamic theorists' position on women has been mostly, but not entirely, lip service. On the theoretical level Khomeini's discourse on women in the early 1960s, started from such unfavorable points that his later pronouncement may seem progressive. In 1960s, one of the reasons why he opposed the monarchical regime was because in 1963, one of the reforms of the Shah included "voting rights" for women against which he explicitly declared his opposition. He also opposed the participation of women in the modern sections of the workforce in the 1960s and one of the first measures of "public policy" undertaken by the new regime was the large-scale, but not total, expulsion of women from state bureaucracies. One incident among many, betrays how Ayatollah Khomeini considered women as second class citizens. During the uprising in Kurdestan early after the revolution some of his women supporters had volunteered to join the male forces to suppress the uprising and were asking his permission to go to battle, to which he replied, "No, it is not advisable, the nation itself [i.e., men], the army will accomplish the task" (Khomeini 1985, 119; emphasis added).

man becomes languid and feeble, particularly those who are used to debauchery and gratification; but when there is war and epic.. man abandons feebleness and lethargy... war is a blessing because it releases the courage inherent in man (Khomeini 1981a, 178-179).

In a ironical twist of the dialectics in his discourse, Khomeini grounded the acquiring of rights in martyrdom, or near-martyrdom. Martyrdom or being severely wounded at the war front was a "certification" of rights for martyrs the veterans or their survivors in this world and the world to come (Khomeini 1982, 27-28).

There is no doubt that Khomeini's discourse at this stage and the policies pursued by the Islamic regime in general can be described as "populism."²⁰ The question, however, is that what is exactly meant by populism? If by populism we mean the mobilization of the popular classes against the more affluent classes and intellectuals, Khomeini's discourse was indeed populist (Khomeini 1981b, 265; 270; 304). If populism entails a campaign against foreign imperialism mixed with xenophobia, Khomeini's discourse and the Islamic movement also qualify for such labeling. If populism also means creating an illusion of power in the people, Khomeini's movements was populist, but it was also more than that. Aside from the demagoguery that characterizes the populist regimes and their discourses, in these regimes there is often some measure of "empowerment" for the popular classes, albeit limited and indirect. In the case of Khomeini's discourse and the political regime built

²⁰ See Abrahamian (1993) for an analysis of Khomeini's discourse and the Islamic movement in Iran in terms of populism.

upon it, we do find also a limited and indirect possibility of the empowerment of the social universal-- the philosophical underpinnings of which I have termed mediated subjectivity. But what primarily characterizes these regimes and discourses as populist is that their limited empowerment affects the people as a collectivity and not as individual citizens. Khomeini did not seem to have discussed the issues of the collectivity and individuality explicitly in his writings precisely because the concept of full-fledged modern individual rights was unacceptable, if not unfamiliar, to him. Thus one of the features that differentiates between Khomeini's version of mediated subjectivity and Shariati's is that Shariati, by emphasizing the priority of the collectivity made it more difficult for the emergence of individual subjectivity. In contrast, by not discussing the issue, Khomeini allowed more space for the potential emergence of the individual subject, provided the concept of and the institutions pertaining to the "Governance of the Jurist," can be sublated in the dialectical development of his discourse. Another potentiality in Khomeini's discourse which may prove to be conducive to individual subjectivity is that he did not reject private property in principle. Throughout his career Khomeini upheld the right to individual ownership, which may (or may not) in the long run prove to be the key to unlock Khomeini's version of mediated subjectivity and release and realize potential for subjectivity. Within the discourse of mediated subjectivity among the Islamists discussed in this chapter, it was Motahhari who paid most attention to the issue of the individual, to which we turn below.

Ayatollah Motahhari: The Metaphysics of Individual Subjectivity

Morteza Motahhari (1920-1979) was born into a clerical family in a small village called Fariman near the city of Mashad, the religiously significant provincial capital of Khorasan. His father had been a religious scholar who had studied in the all important city of Najaf in Iraq and spent some years in Egypt and Arabia before returning to Iran (Algar 1985, 9). In 1936, after a short period of study in Mashad, he went to Qom to study Islamic philosophy. His interest in philosophy attracted him to Qom where philosophy was at least tolerated and in 1945, he began his advanced course of philosophy under Ayatollah Khomeini (Dabashi 1993, 148). Thus, Motahhari became one of the most prominent portages of Khomeini and a deep friendship seems to have developed between the two. While he was in Qom, Motahhari also studied with Mohammed Hossein Tabatabi, who taught a course on "materialist philosophy" and Avicenan philosophy (Dabashi, 1993, 149). Beginning in the mid 1940s, when the power of the Tudeh Party was at its zenith and Marxist thought was receiving much attention in Iran, Motahhari took upon himself the task of challenging Marxist ideology from an Islamic perspective, a task to which he remained loyal until his death. For this reason he began studying Marxist literature produced in Iran and Egypt, all in Persian or Arabic translations and mostly translations of secondary sources. Even though Motahhari's primary concern was with Marxism in Western thought, as we will see later, he was also reacting to non-Marxist Western thought and inevitably engaged in a dialogue with it.

In 1952, Motahhari settled in Tehran, and within two years he started teaching Islamic philosophy in the faculty of theology at Tehran University, setting a rare precedent for the connection between the University and Seminary before the revolution of 1979. In the 1960s, Motahhari was involved in a number of religious associations devoted to the propagation of politicized Islam. He was one of the central figures in the Monthly Religious Association (*Anjoman-e Mahan-e Dini*) which sponsored monthly lectures of a religious and socio-political nature and printed them in their bulletin, the Discourse of the Month (*Goftar-e Mah*), which was banned by the government in 1963. In 1965, Motahhari became one of the founders of Hosseinieh Ershad in an attempt to attract the attention of young educated Iranians in the direction of political religion. Motahhari's involvement in the Hosseinieh Ershad, however, was soon overshadowed by the magnetic personality and discourse of Ali Shariati who was becoming increasingly popular among religiously oriented educated youth at that time. There has been much controversy about the relationship between Motahhari and Shariati and their personal and doctrinal differences which is beyond the scope of the concerns of this chapter, but as we will see below their doctrinal differences are quite evident, even though they both belong to the same matrix of discourse.

In the 1960s, and 1970s, Motahhari was quite active propagating his brand of religious ideology and produced many written books. While he was secretly in touch with his mentor Khomeini in exile, he did not come into direct confrontation with the Pahlavi regime, except for a brief period of imprisonment in the aftermath of June

1963 uprising instigated by and Khomeini and his followers. But during the revolution of 1979, he assumed a particularly important role as the representative of Khomeini in Iran and during the immediate period prior to the triumph of the revolution he was one of the members of the Revolution Council which served as the shadow government of the revolutionary movement. On May 1, 1979, less than three months after the culmination of the revolution and establishment of the Islamic state, Motahhari was assassinated by Furqan, an esoteric political organization opposed to his views. Ayatollah Khomeini wept in public and the funeral of Motahhari, as he described him in his eulogy as the "fruit of my life" (Motahhari 1985a, 19).

From Physis to the Meta-physical: The Journey to Subjectivity

Just like Shariati and Khomeini, but perhaps more articulately and explicitly, the ontological cornerstone of Motahhari's discourse is based upon a movement away from nature to beyond nature, to meta-physics. As we saw above, early in his career, Motahhari had committed himself to challenge Marxian thought and what he considered to be Western materialist thought. In his challenging of the philosophical tenets of Marxian thought, Motahhari, relying on an interpretation of monotheistic ontology, had posited a dual human mode of existence. On the one hand he posited an animal, material and corporeal side of human existence, and on the other hand, a "humanness" and cultural and spiritual life opposed to the former. Marxism, he argued, prioritized the first aspect of human existence and hence denied humans' true humanity by emphasizing the animal

and material side of humanity. He then proceeded to present his ontological views, which shed much light on his most fundamental beliefs about human existence and what I have termed the movement toward subjectivity, worth quoting at length. In contrast to the Marxist view of human existence, he wrote,

The truth is that the course of man's evolution begins with animality and finds its culmination in humanity. This principle holds true for individual and society alike: Man at the outset of his existence is in a material body; through an essential evolutionary movement, he is transformed into spirit or a spiritual substance. What is called the human spirit is born in the lap of the body; it is there that it evolves and attains independence. Man's animality amounts to a nest in which man's humanity grows and evolves. It is a property of evolution that the more the organism evolves, the more independent, self-subsistent and governing of its own environment it becomes. The more man's humanity evolves, in the individual or in society, the more it steps toward independence and governance over the other aspects of his being. An evolved human individual has gained a relative ascendancy over his inner and outer environments (Motahhari 1985a, 29; emphasis added).

The unmistakable metaphysics of subjectivity lead Motahhari, just like Khomeini and Shariati, to the realm of consciousness as a high point in the ontological movement, but again landed ultimately not in Hegelian self-consciousness but in religious beliefs and faith. As Motahhari continued in the same passage,

The evolved individual is the one who has been freed of dominance by the inner and outer environments, but

depends upon belief and faith... The more evolved human society becomes, the greater the autonomy of its cultural life and the sovereignty of that life over its material life. Man of the future is the cultural animal; he is the man of belief, faith, and method, not the man of stomach and waistline (Motahhari 1985, 24-30).

Even though Motahhari ultimately relinquished the notion of self-consciousness by collapsing it into faith and belief, in the process and on occasion he did allude to the importance of the emergence of self-consciousness. In a treatise on the philosophy of ethics, for example, in which he struggled with modern European philosophy, he argued that the prophets have come to transform human consciousness to self-consciousness, the achievement of which is tantamount to achievement of ethics (Motahhari 1987, 132).²¹

Motahhari also invoked the Quranic concept of "viceregency of man" as God's successor on earth as the grounding of his subjectivist approach,

In the Quranic perspective, man is a being chosen by God, his successor [*khalifa*] and vicegerent on earth, half spiritual and half material, with a self-conscious nature, free, independent, a trustee of God, and responsible for himself

²¹ Motahhari also argued that while in the Judeo-Christian tradition the notion of human consciousness is suppressed as evidenced in the story of Genesis, in the Islamic account human consciousness is encouraged, since according to the Quran, God teaches Adam all the names (i.e., realities) and them commands the angels to prostrate themselves before him (Mottahedeh 1985a, 32). Based on this ontology, Motahhari also arrived on a subjectivist epistemology. Drawing on the seventeenth century Iranian philosopher Mulla Sadra, Motahhari argued for the subjectivist epistemology in which consciousness and intellect are the primary faculty involved in the processing of sense data and thereby in representation. See Motahhari and Tabatabai c1978, 63-72.

and the world. He is in control of nature and earth and heavens, knows of good and evil. His being starts from weakness and impotence and evolves toward power and perfection, but he does not find solace except in God's presence and by his memory... (Motahhari, c1979).

In an existentialist fashion a la Sartre, Motahhari conceived of humans as architects and painters who are the only beings endowed with the ability to build their own nature and "paint" their own "visage" in whatever manner they choose (Motahhari c1979, 253; 268). Another aspect of Motahhari's subjectivist discourse was that he, like Khomeini and Shariati, emphasized the Quranic notions of dignity and magnanimity (*karamat va ezat-e nafs*), constituting an ethical pivot for him (Motahhari 1978, 44; 147).

Motahhari postulated that while humans cannot completely sever their lives with factors such as heredity, nature, society and history, they should try to rebel against these limitations and liberate themselves from their tyranny-- that humans can overcome these sources of alienation and realize their subjectivity through the power of their reason and faith (Ensan Dar Quran, 272). He even viewed history in terms of the "dis-alienation," in which the subject overcomes the alienation (*maskh*) and self-estrangement to achieve an authentic self by virtue of consciousness and intellect-- a far cry from Shariati's Heideggerian view of authenticity (Motahhari 1980, 35-36).

Having said all this, we must remember that Motahhari's thought still belongs to the universe of discourse that I have designated as mediated subjectivity. Thus the other side of his discourse is fraught

with the negation of human subjectivity. In his major work on epistemology entitled The Principles of Philosophy and Method of Realism, (which in fact is an extended and elaborate commentary on the work of another contemporary Islamic philosopher) Motahhari criticized Protagoras for his view that, "man is the measure of all things" (Motahhari and Tabatabai c1978, 21). Motahhari had acquired some knowledge about Kant's philosophy through the Persian translation of some secondary sources on Kant. Despite such limitations, he had acquired some impressive understanding of some of the basic concepts of Kantian philosophy. With regards to the Kantian notion of moral autonomy, Motahhari commented that, "it is both true and untrue. It is true in the sense that in reality man's heart inspires these (moral duties) to him. But it is not true in the sense that we assume that human conscience is independent from theism.." The problem with Kant, Motahhari further argued, was that he wanted to portray the "conscience" as the only source of duty without reference to the ultimate Divine source (Motahhari 1978, 128-29). Similar to the two other theorists discussed in this chapter, in Motahhari's discourse the ultimate stage of the movement from nature to beyond does not end in subjectivity as we know it, but in the annihilation of the potential subject in the universal. Motahhari also invoked the analogy of the reunification of the drop with ocean as the highest stage of "self-consciousness" (Motahhari c1979, 299-302).

Immediately after Motahhari had postulated the human as the architect and painter of her destiny, he added the necessity of religious institutions for showing humans how to build and shape

their future (Motahhari c1979, 269). Similarly, in contrast to his attribution of independence and freedom to humans, mentioned earlier, in another essay he denied the possibility of human agency, because as he perceived, it would be in conflict with the universal subject (Motahhari 1979, 53). Motahhari also addressed the issue of vacuity in human reason. He maintained that humans might be able to apply their instrumental rationality to achieve certain ends, but the ends are either set by our instinctual inclination which is not acceptable, or by some external source transcending human reason (Motahhari c1978a, 26). He concluded that revelation has determined the major contours of the ends of human action and our vacuous reason can only move within these contours (Motahhari c1978a, 43-46).

As we will see below, Motahhari was the only theorist among the three studied in this chapter who was interested in the individual. This interest, however, was not as intrinsic to his system of thought as much as it was "forced" upon him by an external factor, namely his total opposition to Marxism. This claim is born out by the fact that viewed from within his own discourse, he often associated the "corporeal materiality," from which humans must distance themselves in the journey to the higher level existence, with individuality,

The elevated and ideal aptitudes of humanity are born of its faith, belief and attachment to certain realities in the universe that we both **extra individual, or general and inclusive, and extra material, or unrelated to advantage or profit** (Motahhari 1985a, 27; emphasis added).

In brief, Motahhari's discourse belonged to the paradigm of mediated subjectivity in which the constant vacillation between the upholding of human subjectivity and denying it was a central characteristic. He clearly expressed this vicissitude in a lecture which was printed in the essay Philosophy of Ethics,

Sartre says "man is a free will". We ask, whence the will?... Man, only in virtue of being a glimmer and emanation of the "meta-physical" can be dominant over nature and [claim that] his resolves are not predetermined... What does it mean [to say that] man has no authentic self except freedom? But of course it is somewhat true that man has no nature and tonight I wanted to explicate this matter in Islamic philosophy. The issue that he [Sartre] has raised under "existentialism", the Islamic philosophers do not recognize as existentialism, but in a different language they have partly expressed ... that man makes his own being, that man chooses his own existence, that man is not like objects, natural (Motahhari 1978, 216-217).

In Motahhari's discourse, just like Khomeini's, the conflict between the two poles of mediated subjectivity took place in the context of his discussion of theodicy and predestination (*Qaza va Qadar*) which I discuss below.

Theodicy and Predestination

For Motahhari the issues of theodicy and predestination constituted questions with which he wrestled for a lifetime. He had correctly recognized the importance of problem of theodicy and its secularizing implication in a religious nation in the process of gradually encountering the revolution of subjectivity. In a book

entitled Adl-e Ellahi which literally means God's Justice, Motahhari pointed out that the issue of theodicy, unlike other theological questions engaging only the minds of theologians and philosophers, is something that is prevalent on a large scale and occupies the mind of the "illiterate countryman" as well as that of the philosophers (Motahhari 1974, 22). If theodicy and related issues did not preoccupy every common person in Iran, they certainly did occupy a great deal of Motahhari's attention. Very significantly, Motahhari himself explained why he had developed such a life-long obsession with these issues. In a book entitled Man and Destiny (*Ensan va Sarnevesht*), he discussed some of the issues involved in the idea of predestination and their implications for the modern world. In that book Motahhari resolved to find out the reasons for the decline of the Islamic civilization, a civilization which once was a "brilliant phenomenon" and a "resplendent light," but now is in a pitiful state. In his search for the answer he came across many accusations leveled at Muslims, by the Westerners, as reasons for their contemporary backwardness. Among these false accusations, he recounted categories such as the belief in predestination, belief in the next world and contempt for this world as well as belief in intercession by the saints, dissimulation (concealment of one's beliefs in face of the enemy) and the expectation of Deliverance (*Entezar-e Faraj*). Among these, Motahhari picked the issue of predestination as the most significant. He explained the reason for his choice in an illuminating passage worth quoting at length,

The first day that I realized the Westerners hold the belief in predestination as one of the more important, even the

most important, reason for the decline of the Muslims, was about twenty years ago during my student days in the seminary of Qom. I was reading the second volume of [Prophet] Mohammed's biography by Mohammed Hussein Heikal... In the second chapter there was a [quotation] by Washington Irving [to the effect] that the belief in "necessity"...[that is] being killed or defeating the enemy were both [considered] victory... made the Islamic troops so fearless and powerful that no army could be a match for them. But at the same the belief [in necessity] contained such a poison which destroyed the impact of Islam. Ever since the successors to the Prophet ceased being warriors and ceased conquering the world... the belief in "necessitarianism" [*jabr*] revealed its devastating property (Motahhari 1979b, XIII-XXV).

Motahhari took these "accusations" as a challenge and set out to prove them wrong, thus engaging in a life-time dialogue with different aspects of the discourse of modernity. There is no doubt that in his challenging of the Juggernaut, he was as much affected by it as he wished to confront it. As a result, one of the major tasks he undertook was to reconcile human volition with providence. In doing so, he, like his mentor Ayatollah Khomeini, discussed the issue of free will and providence in the historical context of the debate between the so called early Islamic "rationalists" the Mutazalites and their opponents, the Asharites. Motahhari agreed with the Mutazalites' view that the criteria set by humans to judge good and evil could also serve as measures for the Divine actions (Motahhari 1974, 9). This meant the acknowledgment of the existence of evil, since evil could not be dismissed as misjudgment based on human criteria. And since unlike Zorastrianism, the existence of evil could

not be attributed to two deities, there is no possibility of attributing evil to Satan (Motahhari 1974, 32). Furthermore, because evil could not be attributed to God either it follows that humans must be free and they choose their courses of action which may result in good or evil. But, as Asha'rites pointed out, Motahhari reminded his readers, the granting of agency to humans meant the denial of God's agency and subjectivity (Motahhari 1974, XXIV). Similar to his mentor, Motahhari attempted to reconcile this perceived contradiction by adopting "a position between positions," but with the difference that, at times, Motahhari seems much bolder in positing human subjectivity. In his book Divine Justice, he wrote,

In the Shii philosophy and theology, man's freedom is posited without man being portrayed as a partner in "God's property," and without God's volition being subjugated and subordinated to human will. Divine Providence [*Qaza va Qadar-e Ellahi*] has been established in the entire universe without implying man's compulsion by God's will (Motahhari 1974, XXX).

Motahhari opposed the necessitarianism of the Asha'rites' type on the grounds of the social evils that it generates. He argued that the belief in humans' unfreedom leaves the hands of oppressors open while it restricts the ability of the oppressed to fight back. Those who have usurped a position of power and/or plundered the public wealth, always talk about God's grace toward them and those who are their victims do not protest since it would be considered a rebellion against the Divine decree (Motahhari 1979b, 19). Motahhari also addressed the question of human and individual

responsibility and confirmed this responsibility against necessitarian views (Motahhari 1979a, 133).

But, in conformity with the logic of mediated subjectivity and as if pressured by his own emphasis on human subjectivity, Motahhari attempted to resolve the putative contradiction between human freedom and Providence from a slightly different angle. He postulated that human agency is on the level of "action" and compulsive action at that, while the Divine Subjectivity is of the creative type (Motahhari 1979a, 127). According to this view human subjectivity is a category **subsumed** under the Universal Subjectivity. As Motahhari put it,

The borderline between theoretical belief and disbelief is "subsumption" [*az O-ii*]. Believing in a being whose existence is not subsumed under Him is disbelief [*sherk*]. Believing in a being whose "action" is not subsumed under Him is also disbelief... (Motahhari 1979a, 102).

As a result Motahhari grounded human volition in Providence rather than in human volition itself, the "will to will," of modern subjectivity.

As I have tried to demonstrate, it is in the characteristic of mediated subjectivity to vacillate between the two poles of positing and negating human subjectivity. In Motahhari's discourse, however, on occasion, this oscillation takes a rather steep sway in the direction of positing human agency. Immediately after he had posited the subsumption of human agency and volition under Providence, Motahhari postulated the possibility of "change in the Providence because of providence," through human agency (Motahhari 1979b,

48). Then, in his own words, he came to an "intriguing" conclusion that even God's knowledge is subject to change. He asked rhetorically,

Is God's knowledge subject to change? Is God's decree subject to revolution? Can lower influence the higher? The answer to all these questions is positive. Yes, God's knowledge can be changed, that is some of God's knowledge is subject to change; God's decrees can be changed. Yes, the lower can influence the higher. The "lower order" [*nezam-e sufla*] particularly man's will and action may shake the "higher order" [*nezam-e ulavi*] and cause changes in it. This is the highest form of man's control over destiny. I confess this is bewildering, but it is true. These are sublime and exalted issues of *bida* [the change in an earlier Divine decree] discussed in the Quran for the first time in the history of human culture (Motahhari 1979b, 49-50).

To be sure, after such bold remarks, Motahhari reverted to negate the possibility of independent human subjectivity. However, in the final analysis he was forced to postulate the idea of independent "essences" with "wills of their own" to explain the existence of evil: "evil exists because beings are different in their own essences and not because of the deficiencies in the transcendental emanation" (Motahhari 1974, 126). Such a tendency on the part of Motahhari inclined him to be relatively more receptive to the idea of individual subjectivity, of course within the limits of the paradigm of mediated subjectivity. Motahhari's interest in the individual, as I mentioned earlier, was not intrinsic to his paradigm. Yet because of the peculiarity of his slightly different paradigm he was able to accommodate the individual more openly. In a book apparently

written to refute Marxist philosophy entitled Society and History (*Jame'-h va Tarikh*), Motahhari often assumed a philosophical instead of a theological approach to issues. He postulated that in the "lower" echelons of existence, in inanimate objects, the individual and the universal are enmeshed in one another. That is the individual is submerged in the universal (*Köt*). As we climb up the ladder of existence, beings acquire more individual independence from the universal and there is a combination of plurality within the unity. In humans this condition is most advanced and there is constant conflict between the individual and the universal and in human society the autonomy of the constituent individuals is most developed (Motahhari 1978b, 331-332). In the same book, Motahhari presented a view concerning the relation between the individual and collectivity in which he mentioned different levels of priority accorded to the individual and collectivity, ranging from the absolute priority of the individual to the absolute priority of the collectivity. Motahhari chose the middle-ground and advocated a type of society in which neither the collectivity nor the individual would dominate the other. In such an ideal society which is approved by the Quran, the organic character of the collectivity is maintained while the "relative autonomy of the individual is preserved" (Motahhari 1978b, 326).

It is interesting that in his misunderstanding of Durkheim's conceptualization of the "social fact" as representing the totality of Durkheim's discourse and as assigning priority to the collectivity, Motahhari took issue with Durkheim and criticized the alleged anti-individualism and determinism in the thought of a modern European

thinker (Motahhari 1978b, 320). As such, in so far as he posited the element of subjectivity in his system of mediated subjectivity, Motahhari realized that subjectivity and freedom must be located in the individual, while he did not deny that importance of the collectivity. In his view while the Quran accords objectivity, power and viability to the society, it also "considers the individual capable of disobeying the society" (Motahhari 1978b, 320). Motahhari also took the concept of "responsibility" to its logical conclusion and located it in the individual,

The teachings of the Quran are entirely based on responsibility, responsibility for the self and for society. The command to do good and refrain from evil is the injunction for the individual to rebel against corruption and depravity in society. The stories and parables of the Quran often contain the rebellion and revolt of the individual against social corruption. The story of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the most noble prophet... they all contain this element (Motahhari 1978b, 331).

In giving credence to the individual in his discourse, Motahhari's sociological views obviously came into conflict with Shariati's. For Motahhari the ideal "Islamic classless society" meant a society without discrimination, and deprivation, but not without differentiation (Motahhari 1979a, 69). He even considered the society as an "arena for competition toward progress and perfection," in which "the hurdles that confine the individual on the way towards perfection and the blaming of human aptitudes," must be

eliminated (Motahhari 1979a, 76).²² It is significant that even in his attempts to achieve a synthesis between the individual and collectivity, at least on occasion, he was more on the side of the individual:

Islam is certainty a social religion and believes in the eminence of society. It believes in the priority of the interests of the collectivity over the individual and has canceled class privileges. At the same time the Islamic social system does not ignore the real rights and privileges of individuals; it does not devalue the individual before the society. Unlike some world thinkers [i.e., Marx] it does not claim that the individual is nobody and society is everything; that all rights belong to the society and not to the individual; that the society is the owner not the individual or that society is authentic but not the individual. Islam definitely believes in private rights, private ownership and the authority of the individual... (Motahhari 1979c, 115-16).

Motahhari's interest in the individual was perhaps partly in response to the modernist discourse, the example of which he found in the purported views of Washington Irving on Islam. His inclination toward the individual however, was perhaps equally if not more motivated by his opposition to Marxist determinism, as we will examine below.

²² These views were probably expressed to oppose Shariati's view and show the ideological contrasts between the two.

Critique of Marxist Determinism

The roots of Motahhari's critique of Marxism must be found in his own ontological constructs. As we saw before, the metaphysics of mediated subjectivity is based on a flight away from the *physis*, or nature and toward meta-physics, the realm beyond nature and matter. This evolution for our three theorists of mediated subjectivity constitutes a journey toward subjectivity. Motahhari found the Marxist emphasis on human labor, production, productive forces, means of production and matter, a reversion back to nature and as such opposed it. As a result, Motahhari criticized the Marxist privileging of labor over consciousness. He rhetorically asked, "whether human nobility lies in labor or thought? whether the human is an offspring of labor or thought?"(Motahhari c1978b, 372). Against Marxist reductionism of human "essence" to labor and the reductions of "idealists" in the reverse direction, Motahhari proposed a "realist" (in French transliteration) approach in which while the priority of consciousness over labor is maintained, the "mutual influence of labor and thought" must be recognized (Motahhari c1978b, 372-373). Utilizing the medieval Islamic philosophers conceptualization of human speech (*nafs-e nateqeh*) as constituting the distinguishing characteristic of the human species, Motahhari criticized the Marxist treatment of consciousness as mere epiphenomenon (Motahhari c1978b, 376).

Based on these premises Motahhari criticized the Marxist reduction of human subjectivity to labor and attribution of subjectivity to the collectivity instead of the individual: "In Marxist

perspective the human existence of man is first collective and not individual and secondly the being of social man is the social labor, that is materialized labor..." (Motahhari c1978b, 383). Thus Motahhari poignantly characterized the Marxist "philosophy of labor" as another type of alienation, worse than the original alienation it sought to remedy. He thought that Marx was so engulfed in the "philosophy of labor" that he forgot that real people are those who walk on the streets and think and make decisions rather than those who are at the mercy of productive forces without autonomous wills (Motahhari c1978b, 385). With regard to the concept of historical materialism, Motahhari pointed out that the means of production do not develop spontaneously and without humans. It is only in the context of humans' relation with nature and exploration and investigation by thinking human agents that the means of production are developed (Motahhari c1978b, 418-19). Significantly, Motahhari referred to the negation of human subjectivity in the determinism implied by the concept of historical materialism,

According to the deterministic theory of historical materialism, material social conditions determine man, give direction to him, and construct his character, will and choice. He is but a mere empty vessel and raw material vis-a-vis the social conditions. Man is made by the social conditions instead of social conditions being made by him. Prior conditions determine the future direction of man; man does not determine the future direction. Therefore, [under these circumstances] freedom cannot have any meaning whatsoever (Motahhari c1978b, 362-363).

Motahhari expanded his critique of Marxism to those Islamic radicals who had embraced major tenets of Marxian thought in general and historical materialism in particular, even though they might have rejected philosophical materialism (Motahhari c1978b, 367). He criticized the Islamic radicals for their populism, a phenomenon which partly characterized his own discourse. However, in a period when Islamic populism was at the zenith of its power and prestige in the 1960s through 1980s, Motahhari's critique of Islamic populism based on his criticism of Marxism, was of much significance.

Motahhari's book Society and History (*Jame'-e va Tarikh*) was primarily intended to refute the tenets of Marxist thought and the determinism therein and as such emphasized the freedom of subjectivity and even that of the individual subject. Yet at the very end of this book, Motahhari, loyal to the paradigm of mediated subjectivity, declared the freedom of subjectivity and the potentiality to change history as the unfolding of Divine Providence thereby reconfirming his notion of the subsumption of human subjective will under the universal.²³ Thus Motahhari's discourse remained within the borders of the paradigm of mediated subjectivity, even though certain elements in his thought pushed these boundaries to their limits. As a result, it can only be expected

²³A question may arise that the synthesis between the subject and the universal has been the at the very core of the modern quest of harmony ever since Hegel. However, it must be remembered that, as the two terms "synthesis" and "subsumption" suggest, in the latter, subjectivity is in a rudimentary stage and not fully developed ,whereas "synthesis" presupposes a fully developed subject which while maintaining its full fledged subjectivity seeks harmony with the universal.

that the contradictions inherent in the paradigm of mediated subjectivity manifest themselves in the more socio-political aspects of Motahhari's thought which I will try to analyze briefly below.

Contradictions in Motahhari's Socio-Political Thought

It has to be noted that Motahhari's writings direct bearings on political issues and particularly revolutionary politics are relatively scant. Perhaps because of his relative caution in his relations with the Pahlavi regime and his short life after the revolutionary period, unlike Shariati and Khomeini, his "political" writings were minimal. Immediately after the triumph of the Islamic revolution and shortly before his death, Motahhari wrote a few essays, some unfinished, regarding the revolutionary politics which were published posthumously. In an interview published with these essays he expressed his forebodings regarding the trampling of freedom as a result of the revolutionary process, and the strong populist trend within it, while he acknowledged the necessity of social justice (Motahhari 1985b, 22-23). In another essay in the same book, however, while he advocated "freedom of thought" (*azadi fekr*) he opposed what he called "freedom of opinion" (*azadi aqideh*). He defined thought in terms of "reason" (*aql*) as opposed to "faith" (*iman*). He argued that Islam, in contrast to Christianity which has suppressed reason and stressed faith, has emphasized reason (Motahhari 1985b, 92-95). On the other hand, he defined "opinion" (*aqideh*) in terms of convictions (*e'teqad*) and "attachments" (*delbastegi-ha*) which are grounded in "emotions" and as such he

rejected them (Motahhari 1985b, 97).²⁴ This type of reasoning led Motahhari also to espouse a notion of guidance from above, denying the freedom of citizenship,

What is required to respect man? Is it to guide him on the path to progress and perfection? Or is it to claim that since he is man and possesses human dignity, he is free to choose whatever he wishes for himself and we should respect it because he has chosen it for himself, even though we know it is not right and we know it is false with myriad consequences? What man chooses for himself might be chains. How can we respect these chains? (Motahhari 1985b, 100).

Yet in another essay in the same book, he asserted that people should have enough freedom in politics to learn how to elect a representative to the parliament to increase their political consciousness. Even in regards to religious issues he thought people should have certain freedoms to develop their consciousness. He used the analogy of a person trying to learn something who needs to be left alone, despite discomfort, to learn by trial and error (Motahhari 1985b, 123).

These contradictions, rooted in Motahhari's paradigm of mediated subjectivity, also found expression in his writings on women. Before the revolution, he had written comparatively more on the "safe"

24 According to these criteria, Motahhari found the "logic" of monotheism sound because it is "rational," whereas he viewed the logic of non-monotheistic religions grounded in "opinion," and therefore unsound (Motahhari 1985b, 97-98). Thus he criticized the British government, for example, for "granting" freedom of worship to all forms of "idol worship" such as "cow worship" as abuse of freedom of thought and the Declaration of Human Rights (Motahhari 1985b, 99-100).

issue of women. Some of his articles had even appeared in the "secular" and mainstream women's magazine, *Zan-e Ruz* (roughly meaning "modern woman") under the Shah's regime. Thus in a book written on the subject of the veil for women, for example, he argued that the traditional head to toe wrapping of women which causes their social isolation was not an authentic Islamic dress code for women. Indeed, he argued, the proper Islamic "covering" (*pushesh*) was not to cause social isolation for women and confine them to the private sphere. He even did not oppose women's driving. On the other hand Motahhari considered women's demand for equal rights "selfish lust," conducive to "create scandal" (Motahhari 1991, 226-227). It should be noted that in his misogyny, Motahhari's theory was not only informed by the incompleteness of subjectivity characteristic of mediated subjectivity. In other words, he did not merely oppose women's rights only because he half-heartedly supported human rights. Rather he did so because he offered the partial rights of mediated subjectivity only to men, as he considered the human lineage the property of men exclusively. As a result, in this regard his discourse failed to universalize even the incomplete rights of mediated subjectivity by confining them to men only.²⁵

As we have seen in this chapter Islamic revolutionary political thought in Iran is characterized by an intense vicissitude that is apparent in the work of these major architects Shariati, Khomeini and Motahhari as they share the same universe of discourse which I

²⁵ The reason why men are so sensitive to prevent their wives' contacts with other men, Motahhari argued, was because "creation" has commissioned only men to preserve the lineage in the future (Motahhari 1991, 61).

have designated as mediated subjectivity. It is my contention that the contradictions inherent in this paradigm manifested themselves in the institution and practices of the post-revolutionary Iran, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this chapter. But these contradictions are also, to a large extent, present in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, a document which has been the object of much attention and contention, while most of its more progressive principles have been grossly violated in practice.

After the revolution of 1979, many different groups with different political agendas and various degrees of religiosity contended for the forging of the new constitution of the new regime. However, the final outcome was a document which bears the imprints of the religious establishment in general and the revolutionary clerics and Ayatollah Khomeini in particular.

Reflecting the strong universalistic and populistic tendencies of the Islamic discourse discussed in this chapter, some of the articles of this constitution uphold various and social and economic rights such as social security, health services, education and the right to a dwelling, as universal (Articles 29-31).

However, much in conformity with the characteristics of mediated subjectivity, i.e., contradiction, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic only allows "half-rights" for individuals as citizens. Sovereignty does not belong to people even though they are assumed to be in charge of their own destiny (Article 2 and 6). The right to legislate also exclusively belongs to God, while there are the provisions for a parliament whose members are the elected representatives of the people and legislation is approved by this

body (Article 2 and 58). In this constitution the anti-democratic notion of the "Governance of the Jurist" is institutionalized. According to Article 107, the highest Jurist in the land is appointed as the Supreme Leader of the country. But the people elect an "Assembly of Experts" which in turn will select a jurist among the qualified jurists to be the Supreme Leader. Once the Supreme Leader is appointed he is only responsible to God, yet he could be dismissed by the same Assembly of Experts if he no longer fits the criteria for qualification. Moreover, while the Supreme Leader has vast powers under his command, there is a President who is elected by popular vote and responsible to the people (Article 24). Article 4 gives the power to run the affairs of the country to the Guardian council which consists of a body of 12 men appointed by the Supreme Leader and the head of the Judiciary who is himself appointed by the Supreme Leader. At the same time Article 6 recognizes people's rights to participate in the affairs of the country. Freedom of the press, publication and unarmed gathering are guaranteed in this constitution, provided they are not "detrimental to fundamental principles of Islam" (Articles 24 and 27).

The contradictions inherent in the discourse of mediated subjectivity render it a transitory discourse with a large potential for transformation of itself and society and history. Whether this transformation is going to take place and resort in the emergence of a full blown universal subjectivity of democratic citizenship will depend to a large extent on whether the elements on the side of universalizable subjectivity or those against it would take the upper hand. In contrast to the prevalent belief which holds monotheistic

religion and modernity as mutually exclusive, based on the analysis presented in this chapter, one can see the complicated relations as well as the continuities and discontinuities between monotheism and modernity in Iran. One can see the dialectical contributions of monotheism to the emergence of modernity. This process of the development of modernity out of monotheism has taken place once in Europe, but it can also happen once more in Iran and the Middle East. In the next chapter I will pursue the examination of religious discourse in the post-revolutionary era in Iran.

Chapter 6

Post-Revolutionary Discourses: The Contraction and Expansion of Subjectivity

In contrast to what might be expected after the triumph of a colossal revolutionary process and the establishment of a regime deriving its power mainly from a strong ideological drive, in Iran the development of socio-political thought did not end with the establishment of the Islamic regime in 1979. Indeed, the post-revolutionary period has witnessed a proliferation of socio-political discourses articulated by groups and individuals inside and outside the country, notwithstanding the clerical regime's censorship and attempts to control the flow of information.

Several factors may be recounted to explain this turn of events. Soon after the completion of political and cultural dominance by the clerical establishment in the early 1980's and their victory in what may be conceived as a "mini civil war" against the internal opposition, a large number of lay intellectuals withdrew their having taken stock in the Islamic discourse. Even though this phenomenon did not have an immediate impact on the revolutionary populace captured by the zeal of revolutionary activities, it prepared the background for the emergence of different discourses and the evolution of religious discourse.

The total mobilization of the populace during the war with Iraq(1980-1988) had contradictory effects in terms of the

development of socio-political discourse fueled by popular demands and expectations. On the one hand the clerical establishment utilized and reinforced their revolutionary ideologies in mobilizing the populace during the revolution and the war. But on the other hand, this mobilization required the popular participation in the social and political affairs of the country which the clerics had to encourage during the revolution and war. This participation created the popular demand and expectation of more democratic participation which could not but be recognized and articulated in the post-revolutionary discourses.

The factionalism among the clerical elite ruling the country has also contributed to the development of discourses after the revolution. The division among the clerical rulers-- as well as those clerics who have shunned politics-- along ideological political and economic interest lines, have helped the erection of a political atmosphere which is conducive to competing theoretical posturings. This has allowed a measure of expression of different thoughts, otherwise not possible given the oppressive features of polity in Iran.

The economic hardship that has visited Iran after the revolution has had its impact on the cultural sphere also. The devastating economic effect of the war with Iraq, the drastic reduction in oil revenues due to the changing balance of geopolitical powers, and the regime's pursuit of strict policy of non alliance and isolationism, especially during the first few years after the revolution reinforced by the economic sanctions imposed on Iran by some Western countries and economic mismanagement by the ruling elite, have

created a dire economic situation with important cultural consequences. The most obvious of these consequences has been the desire for economic development which has been expressed by most classes and social strata. This has in turn generated a national discussion over the issue of modern technology in a society mobilized by religious ideology. The two issues of economic development and modern technology have necessitated the broaching of the larger cultural context of modernity, especially the notions of democracy and freedom and their affinity with religion and religious institutions.

The complexities of social life in the post-revolutionary Iran have been increased by two other factors. One has been the rapid and multifold expansion of urban areas accompanied by the cultural changes peculiar to city dwelling. As a result of unregulated rural migration as well as the war refugees taking residence in large cities, Iran's major urban areas have witnessed manifold population growth and expansion. Life in the city with its impersonal relations, the rule of the money nexus and fast pace, has been exacerbated in Iran due to the post-revolutionary economic difficulties, resulting in changing cultural ethos that demands adjustment to the realities of modern urban life. The second aspect of the increasing complexity of social life in Iran has been the rapid growth of the young in the population. During the first years of the revolution the clerics encouraged the higher birth rate partly as a means to counter Iraq's technological advantage in the war and partly on religious grounds. The result has been a vast increase in the proportion in the youth profile in an increasingly dense urban setting which has entailed a challenge

posed by the youth, not least by young women, to the archaic and atavistic cultural policies pursued by the Islamic regime.

The effects of "globalization", especially its influences on the cultural sphere, and consequently on the socio-political discourse in Iran, has been also considerable. The Islamic regime's professed battlefield against the West and its "corrupting influence" has been primarily in the cultural arena. Accordingly, the state and its various apparatuses have focused their efforts on curbing the cultural penetration of this realm, from the first days after the establishment of the clerical regime. Yet, from the very start of regime's crack down on "western culture" the porous gates of short-wave radios have been inundated by signals from exile Iranian and non-Iranian sources. In the 1990's the onslaught of airwaves has been reinforced by the pictures descending from satellites, notwithstanding the regime's attempts to ban reception of satellite television. The black market in distribution of banned foreign video production has also kept a large window open to outside cultural influences. The production of the literature more directly pertaining to socio-political issues by Iranians outside Iran has also contributed to the development of alternative discourses within the country itself.

As a consequence of factors, the evolution of socio-political thought in post-revolutionary Iran has given rise to a distinct lay discourse on the one hand and a variation of religiously oriented discourses, on the other. I will not be concerned with the non-religious discourses, mainly because of their relatively weak social base within the country, even though the prospects for their social

acceptance and convergence with some of the religiously oriented discourses seem possible in the future. Within the post-revolutionary religiously oriented discourses, however, two distinct trends are visible. Judged against the basic criteria of modernity discussed in this work, i.e., universalizable subjectivity, one of these discourses consciously seeks accommodation with modernity, to an extent unsurpassed by previous religious discourses in Iran, especially with regard to its gradual espousal of modern democratic principles. To be sure, the intellectual genealogy of this discourse originates in the paradigm of mediated subjectivity discussed in chapter five. However, this Islamic discourse with high democratic aspirations, especially in the second decade after the revolution, has gradually emerged from that paradigm and as a result exhibits fewer of the contradictions of mediated subjectivity. This is not to say that this intellectual trend does not relapse into the contradictions of mediated subjectivity once in a while, but compared to the vacillations exhibited by its intellectual parent, as we saw in the last chapter, its own fluctuations are much more subdued. This intellectual trend is foremost represented by a philosopher known by his pen name, Abdolkarim Sorush. Having served at some of highest echelons of cultural state apparatuses of the Islamic Republic and given his active participation in the revolution, Sorush's intellectual career began in close affinity with the intellectual heritage of the Islamic revolutionary discourse examined in the last chapter. But as years have passed Sorush has elaborated and expanded the element of subjectivity in Shariati, Motahhari, Khomeini and other Islamic thinkers and has arrived at what seems

to be the threshold of modern democratic principles. I will elaborate on the works of Sorush in the latter part of this chapter.

Sorush, however, is not the only personality or group who has contributed to this trend, but because of space consideration I only suffice to brief mention of some of other figures in this trend.

Mohammad Mojtahehd Shabestari* (b.1936), currently a professor of theology at Tehran University, is a cleric who had served as the director of the Islamic Center in Hamburg for a number of years before the revolution and is familiar with western primary sources in western languages (Boroujerdi 1996, 168). In one of his recent writings, Shabestari has applied the principles of western hermeneutics to Islam. By demonstrating the changes and fluctuations in history of knowledge and arguing that they equally apply to religious knowledge, Shabestari has reasoned that knowledge about God and the prophets is only possible in the light of human knowledge in each historical period (Mojtahed- Shabestari 1996, 33). He has also applied his theoretical insights to the abject social conditions in Iran by discussing the absence of a philosophy of civil rights in the socio-political discourse in the country (Boroujerdi 1996, 168). Another cleric, Salehi Najafabadi, has made some fairly significant contributions to this trend of socio-political thought. In a book entitled The Eternal Martyr (Shahid-e Javid) written in the 1970s, Salehi created quite a stir in seminary intellectual circles by casting doubts about the predestined character of Imam Hussein's martyrdom and the role of human volition in his decision to fight against the enemies of Shiism against all odds during the first century of Islam (Moussavi 1992, 107). In a new book

written after the revolution, Salehi has reinterpreted Khomeini's concept of the "Governance of the Jurist," in a direction more compatible with democratic principles of popular sovereignty. While he has engaged in some theoretical discussions on the nature of social contract, Salehi has focused on those of Ayatollah Khomeini's pronouncements which encourage the populace to participate in political and social affairs of the country (Salehi-Najafabadi, 1984).

The second post-revolutionary religiously oriented trend of socio-political thought can trace its genealogy more to non-religious sources than religious. The radical religious anti-modernist discourse which has strong adherents both among the clerics and lay religious intellectuals and groups, owes most of its intellectual parentage, interestingly enough, to the "secular" Iranian philosopher, Ahmad Fardid (1921-1994) whose anti-modern interpretation of Heidegger as we saw in chapter four, was very popular among some lay intellectuals in the 1970's. Despite its "secular" roots, this trend has adopted a strict religious rhetoric against modernity and human subjectivity. The central figure in this discourse is Reza Davari-Ardakani, a professor of philosophy in Tehran University with a seminary training as well as formal training in Western philosophy at Tehran University. I will discuss Davari's thought in some detail as the representative of this trend and as the most profound and original figure in the development of this discourse. It should be realized, however, that contributors to this discourse, both among the conservative clerical intellectuals and lay religious intellectuals are numerous and diverse in their intellectual backgrounds. What brings

them together is Davari's utilization of some Western counter-enlightenment metaphysical assumptions to boost a traditional religious view of society and politics. Most of the intellectuals and journalists among this group have been involved in a polemical debate with the members of the first group and have brought their ideas, especially those of Sorush under severe attack for alleged undermining of the Islamic ethos.¹

In the first part of this chapter I will discuss the views of Davari-Ardakani first, because even though the manner of the development of the two discourses are in many ways intertwined, the radical ontological assumptions of the conservative discourse represented by Davari seems to have provided Sorush with some of the grounds for adjusting his own assumptions. The gradual shift in Sorush's discourse is no doubt partly related to the social implications of the conservatives' theoretical positions articulated in their discourse. This does not mean, however, that Davari's positions has remained fixed and as we will see his own positions have changed also.

Davari: Leap from Being to Haq (The Truth)

Reza Davari-Ardakani was born in 1933 in Ardakani, a provincial town between Yazd and Esfahan. He grew up in Ardakan and studied there until the ninth grade. In 1951, when he was 18 he became a teacher and two years later, after the CIA sponsored coup against Mossadeq he was laid off probably because of his sympathies for the liberal nationalist movement at the time. He then attended

¹ For the views of some of the other individuals contributing to this discourse see, for example, Karimi 1990 and Larijani 1993.

the seminary in Esfahan for a while, after which he went to Tehran and enrolled at faculty of letters at Tehran University and there, by chance, became interested in philosophy (Davari 1996, 7). Davari received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Tehran University in 1967 and began teaching there ever since. In an autobiographical interview with the journal *Kayhan Farhangi*, Davari has mentioned the philosopher Ahmad Fardid as an important influence on him, even on his personality, who "saved" him from "Durkheimian positivism and sociologism" (Davari 1996,8). Davari's Ph.D. dissertation was on political thought in Greece and Islamic philosophy and he has published two treatises on Islamic philosophy based on his dissertation. He has also translated Camus' Letter to A German Friend into Persian. At the time of the revolution Davari published a book entitled, What is Philosophy? (*Falsafe Chist?*) in which he laid out his major theoretical grounds. After the revolution he published several books and numerous articles on socio-political issues elaborating his theoretical views. He has also held semi-official positions serving as a researcher at Islamic Republic's Academy of Philosophy, Iranian Academy of Science and as the editor of the journal *Nameh Farhang* published by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Boroujerdi 1996, 158).

Like many other Iranian intellectuals in the second half of the 20th century, the concept of *Gharbzadegi* , or Westoxication, has provided Davari a point of departure, but as we will see below his interpretation of this concept is very different from that of Al Ahmad, the man who promoted this concept, and although he did not coin it, his name has become synonymous with it.

Subjectivity and Reason as Westoxication

In chapter four I mentioned that the concept of Westoxication was first coined by the "secular" philosopher Ahmad Fardid, but was later adopted and promulgated by Jalal Al Ahmad to designated Iranians' loss of their subjectivity by surrendering their identity to the West. In his ground laying work, What is Philosophy? Davari dismissed Al Ahmad's notion of Westoxication as a disease incidental to science, industry and (modern) culture and as a result views modern science and technology inseparable from modern culture (Davari 1980, XIIIX). The modern *technique* (in French transliteration), Davari has argued, has imposed its dominion over everything including humans and if there is going to be any change it should start in the manner humans view the universe, themselves and the origins of both (Davari 1980, XIIIX). Thus Davari has returned to Fardid's original conception of Westoxication as the preponderance of the "egotistic" and "narcissistic" aspects of human existence over other realms of existence. In the rise of the West, Davari maintains, a world has been created in which humans consider themselves the center and axiom of everything. The rise of subjectivity in the West has caused the fall and occlusion of the Truth and given rise to modern sciences ever since the Western humans advanced their hubristic claims of theomorphism (Davari 1980, XIIIX).

Al Ahmad never penetrated to the bottom of Westoxication, Davari has contended, because he never realized that it was the "Realm of Power", a code for Davari to refer to subjectivity , that underlies Westoxication. Reflecting Fardid's original concept of

Westoxication, Davari believes Al Ahmad never understood that Western tradition of "humanism" constituted the core element of Westoxication and as such Westoxication is not an affliction affecting Easterners only, but first and foremost that of the Westerners which has come to engulfed all of humanity (Davari 1980, 59).

One of the terms Davari has chosen to render the concept of subjectivity is *nafsaniyat* which literally means "selfness" and, as we saw in previous chapters, has carried negative connotations historically in Iran (Davari 1980, XIIIX). Elsewhere he has made use of the French translation of *subjectivite* as the foundation of the modern world (Davari 1994, 369). On many occasions he has advanced the phrase "*khod-bonyadi*", literally meaning "self-foundationism," as the basic principle of modernity. Another key notion in Davari's discourse is the concept of Haq. This Perso-Arabic term has many meanings, including right, authentic, fair, correct, reasonable and God, among others. With the emergence of subjectivity or *nafsaniyat*, Davari claims, Haq has been eclipsed and the human has arrogated the state of Haq for itself,

Westoxication began when man arrogantly claimed the status of Haq for himself and in the West this claims knowingly and unknowingly, became the foundation of all ideologies, views, rules, institutions and norms (Davari 1980, XIIIIV).

In a different essay, Davari has observed that *nafsaniyat* may not be an accurate term to describe the ontological basis of modernity since traditionally it has a connotation of appetites (*hava*) and the two terms have usually been paired (*hava-ye nafs*). Consequently Davari has suggested another cognate of the same term, *nafsiyat*, for

translating the concept of subjectivity (Davari 1994, 65). Davari's motivation in making such a distinction seems to be avoiding the perennial opposition between reason (*aql*) and appetites in Islamic tradition, since he has suggested that "Western reason" as such constitutes the core of modernity as a manifestation of subjectivity (Davari 1994, 65). Thus while Davari has implicated "reason" as one aspect of Westoxication, he has attempted to demonstrate a strong affinity between "reason" and appetites (*hava*) in modernity (Davari 1994, 67).

Davari holds philosophy as such responsible for the emergence of human subjectivity and modernity. In his view, modern philosophy in particular, is entirely the positing of subjectivity (*enaniyat*) of humanism and anthropocenterism (Davari 1980, 49). According to Davari, at the beginning of history, the philosopher is a lover of knowledge itself. In Hegel, however, philosophy is not love of knowledge any longer, but knowledge itself, and the human claims to have reached absolute knowledge. One may call this "nihilism" or "Westoxication", but the reality is that his is the process of manifestation of the human as the Truth, from which many of the weaknesses and strengths of contemporary humans emanate (Davari 1980, XXI). The pre-Renaissance philosophy contains the seeds, Davari has contended, but it is modern philosophy which has led us to turn away from the Truth,

Notwithstanding the roots of Westoxication in Greek philosophy and its 2500 years of history, its specific and predominant form has emerged with the Renaissance. With the appearance of Westoxication, the old form of history is abolished and a new man is born who is no longer submissive to the Haq [Truth].

He forgets the Haq so that he can replace Him and to expropriate the earth and the sky (Davari 1982, 58).

In Davari's analysis, modern epistemology, especially that of Kant, is responsible for the creation of the modern benighted neglect of the Truth. Kant, in his estimation, reduced the "existence" (*vojud*) to the object of knowledge. As a result two types of knowledge have become possible in modernity. One is the scientific knowledge of objects and the other is the "knowledge of the conditions of the possibility and realization of such science", which is called "critical philosophy" (Davari 1980, 96). Davari's discourse claims to be informed by a Heideggerian worldview and as such he views Western history as the realization of "Western" metaphysics,

That Kant has put aside the category of existence and emphasized knowledge, reducing philosophy to epistemology, was not merely an accident resulting from personal observations; rather it was necessitated by the unfolding of the history of metaphysics (Davari 1980, 96).

In Davari's Heideggerian interpretation, modern science is a moment of metaphysics and metaphysics has realized its absolute form in science and technology (Davari 1980, 83). As I tried to demonstrate in chapter five, the notion of metaphysics in Islamic culture has been very close to the so called Western metaphysics, a flight from the *physis*, or nature, toward subjectivity despite its distortions in its religious form. As a result, Davari's views on metaphysics have the potential to run contrary to views traditionally held on this topic in Iran and, as we will see below, he has tried to grapple with this issue in his discussion of classical Islamic philosophy. Given the

importance of modern science and technology for a country like Iran, Davari's pronouncements on the metaphysical origins of science and technology have had far reaching implications and created much debate on the issue.

Davari has proposed the notion of "representation" (*tamasol*) as the link between subjectivity and modern science,

In the view of the classics, reason was one of the faculties of the ego with which it perceives and gains knowledge of the beings. But modern reason is the faculty of "representation" and an aspect of subjectivity (human self-foundation,) in which whatever that exists is mainly an object for the subject of knowledge. With this "representation" and reason, which is the representing faculty, modern science is born (Davari 1980, 129).

One of the central themes in Davari's discourse is the question of imperialism and its ontological foundations. This issue has also been a prominent question in Iran in view of the anti-imperialist campaigns of the past two decades. Davari has maintained that domination is an inherent part of the culture of modernity. By giving authority to humans and placing them at the center of the universe, the subject of knowledge, is by nature seeking domination (Davari 1980, 153). Imperialism, in Davari's scheme, is the logical extension of the sphere of domination gaining preponderance in modernity. As such, Davari has rejected the Leninist theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. In its stead Davari has referred to imperialism as realization of the core element of modern culture, philosophy, art and literature (Davari 1982, 28). Accordingly, he has maintained a qualitative difference between modern imperialism

and premodern conquests (Davari 1982, 149-51). Furthermore, he has suggested that imperialism is an inevitable reality of modernity in which some peoples dominate and some others are dominated, since for every subject to be a subject an object of domination is necessary (Davari 1982, 165). This pessimistic reading of the concept of "master and slave" has prompted Davari to conclude the impossibility of any form of universalization of subjectivity, since it is impossible for all to be dominant (Davari 1982, 165). This is particularly significant for the peoples of the third world, since even if they attempt to emulate the Western imperialist nations, at best they will become imperialists themselves (Davari 1982, 171). This principle of international relations equally applies to inter-subjective relations, in which it is impossible to delimit the subjectivity of the 'self' with that of the "other." (Davari 1985, 95)

This pessimistic view of modernity has led Davari to seek the solutions to the ontological problems of modernity not in any form of intersubjectivity at all but in the radical eradication of subjectivity altogether. However, ironically his guides in this ontological quest are not primarily Islamic sources, but recent European philosophers of counter-enlightenment persuasion. In his theoretical works written in early 1980s Davari has shown a remarkably accurate understanding of primary philosophers of modernity, notwithstanding his hostility toward them. Paraphrasing Henrich Heine, Davari has drawn a direct line from Kant to Robespierre portraying the former as the designer and the teacher and the latter putting his designs into practice (Davari 1982, 110). On many occasions Davari has also referred to the philosophy of Hegel and the

enormous but unrecognized influence of his ideas on modernity (Davari 1980, XXI). But even Hegel, in Davari's analysis is of no use in overcoming the ontological problems of modernity, since he views Hegel's philosophy as the ultimate expression of the revolution of subjectivity which has been in the works since the classical Greeks and assumed its final form in a philosophy of the Renaissance until its perfection by Hegel.²

Nietzsche, Davari has argued, is the transitional figure in the quest for overcoming modernity. In Hegel, Davari maintains, the human is pressured to be self-consciousness first and only secondly belonging to nature, to which he must be reconciled. But Nietzsche's human is first and foremost an animal and secondly consciousness (Davari 1980, 206). It is Heidegger who is credited with the reversing of the entire "metaphysics". What the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Saint Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche have in common is that theirs is a variation of metaphysics (Davari 1980, 225). The plight of modern humans reflected in this inauthentic existence is rooted in the fact that they are alienated from the Being (*Vujud*) and cannot hear its summons (Davari 1980, 153-4). It is Heidegger who demonstrated that the proper station of humans is to be attentive and heedful (as opposed to being forgetful) toward the Being (Davari 1980, 232). Heidegger reveals to us the inner Truth of the West which may help us liberate ourselves from the prison of Westoxication by penetrating into the depth of

² Davari's reading of Hegel's philosophy is relatively sophisticated but he makes no mention of Hegel's efforts to overcome the ontological problems of subjectivity and modernity. See Davari 1980, the section on Hegel.

Western Philosophy; Heidegger promises an end to the guady and hypocritical oppression of the West (Davari 1994, 56-7).

Such views of metaphysics have the potential of leading Davari into opposition against Islamic metaphysics. Consequently, recognizing the emphasis on "reason" in the Islamic tradition, Davari has made attempts to reconcile his thoughts and Islamic notions of reason. As a result, in some of his post-revolutionary writings he has attempted to accommodate the religious notions of reason with his attack on metaphysics as the unfolding of human reason.³ While Davari has attempted to reconcile his thought with Islamic religiosity, he has not spared Islamic philosophy, not even the "rational" theology of *Kalam* from his attacks. He has charged that the rational Islamic theology known as *Kalam* has been too much under the influence of philosophy so that some of texts of the former are indistinguishable from the latter (Davari 1980, 245-6). Moreover, Davari has suggested, the truth of Islamic religion did not need the rationalistic arguments of *Kalam* to stand (Davari 1980, 254). Yet, Davari is more sympathetic toward *Kalam* than Islamic philosophy since *Kalam* recognizes human poverty and inability, whereas philosophy is based on human power and reason (Davari 1980, 270). Islamic philosophy, Davari has contended, is in essence Greek and as such does not belong to Islamic religiosity, and religion has no need for it (Davari 1981, 289-90).

In contrast to Islamic philosophy, Davari has written, mysticism (*tasavof*) has had nothing to do with humanism and has been the

³ See for example Davari 1982, chapter 2, and Davari 1994, 53-65.

complete antithesis of humanism (Davari 1980, 298). In the mystical tradition of the Sufis human essence lies in contingency,

Human essence lies in his "nobodyness" and nothingness. He has no real existence and essence. His essence lies in annihilation...(Davari 1980, 299).

Davari's adoption of "philosophy of Being", thus leads him to embrace the Sufi notion of annihilation of the subject, a process which involves a leap from the Heideggerian conceptualizations of the Being, arising from the Europeans' experience of modernity, to the Sufi notions of submerging in the Haq(Truth). However, for Davari the reversal of metaphysics and annihilation in the Truth is not a mere theoretical construct, as the Islamic Revolution of 1979 represents the embodiment of this process.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Antidote to Westoxication

In the introduction to What is Philosophy?, which was published shortly after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Davari has described the revolution as a reaction to Westoxication which portends the end of domination of the West and beginning of a new era in which religion would dampen the "holocaust of Westoxication" (Davari 1980, XXII-XXIII). He has also described the Islamic revolution in terms of the renewal of humans covenant with God, a covenant which has was broken in modernity,

The Islamic Revolution must...summon a return to the beginnings and a renewal of the Covenant. This renewal of the Covenant requires the we [Iranians] break the covenant to which we acquiesced in Westoxication. If we break away from this covenant

with Westoxication it will be remembered in the world and would undermine the currant covenant...we take refuge in God and ask Him for assistance in our renewed Covenant, a covenant which is future of mankind (Davari 1980, XXIII).

In his explanation of the contents of this renewed Covenant, Davari has invoked Kierkeggard's conception of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son as the price for renewal of the covenant. Thus he has suggested submission to God symbolized by the sacrifice of all worldly attachments in order to achieve a renewal of the Covenant with the True Beloved (Davari 1992, 122)

In the manner of proponents of the great world revolutions, Davari allows his ambitions a free reign and views the Iranian revolution as a type of revolution which might usher in the end of modern revolutions inspired by the revolution of subjectivity. In a passage worth quoting at length, Davari has observed that if a people undermines the current world politics,

it would be at the threshold of a revolution which is in essence different from the revolutions of modernity. The French revolution and anti-imperialist revolutions of the subjugated nations, have all been [waged] in order to establish and realize the truth of the West. But there is another [type of] revolution which undermines the West and when expanded it will overthrow the west. With this revolution mankind may renew the forgotten Covenant of the past and in a way a new era will be established. This revolution would no longer be the realization of philosophy as a new horizon would open in which mankind would be encouraged to...question the [regime of] "*technique*,"... the experiment of the Islamic revolution will shed light on many things (Davari 1982 131).

This radical interpretation of anti-imperialist strategy in Davari's discourse is reflected in his thoughts on the impossibility of reconciliation between modernity and what he considers to be Islam. In contrast to many Islamist theorists of the twentieth century, in Davari's discourse there is very little space for reconciliation between Islam and modernity. Such a reconciliation for Davari would entail becoming accomplices with imperialists of the East (i.e., the former Soviet Union and its allies) and the West who have expropriated and dominated everything in the world. The purpose of the Islamic Revolution has not been to compete with the United States and the Soviet Union or to surpass them in monopolizing domination (Davari 1982, 210-11). Davari recognizes the enormity of the power of modernity which surrounds the Islamic Revolution in Iran. But this does not mean that modernity must stay and Islamic revolution should adapt itself to its demands. With the expansion of the Islamic Revolution all social and political categories such as the law, politics and technology should conform to Islam since Islam can not conform to these and remain Islam (Davari 1982, 263).

The only concession that Davari has made in this regard has been in the sphere of modern science and technology. Apparently sensitive to social forces demanding modern science and technology, especially as a result the war and the economic difficulties after the revolution, Davari seems to have adjusted his positions on this issue gradually (Davari 1996, 142-3). In the early years of What is Philosophy? when he articulated his more theoretical views, Davari viewed technology as the very essence of modernity as he called the latter the "sovereignty of *technique*", (*velayat-e teknik*). In his later

and less theoretical writings, however, he has reluctantly accepted the necessity of science and technology(Davari 1982,211). As long as the "sovereignty of technique," i.e., the domination of modernity and the West, exist, the need for technology in a country like Iran remains,

The purpose of our revolution has not been to achieve ideal perfection in modern civilization, but until the West starts to crumble from within, we will not shun technology and technological sciences and earnestly seek modern science (Davari 1982, 237).

As we can see from this passage, Davari's attitude toward modern technology is merely utilitarian, necessitated by the contingencies of Iran's situation. Iran needs the modern positivist sciences and technology to survive, but these must be confined to the achievement of evil but necessary this worldly needs, otherwise technology's dominance would be established again (Davari 1994, 99). Davari's acknowledgment of the indispensability of technology for Iran is against his earlier theoretical articulations and to try to solve this problem, he has suggested a distinction between what he has called the "founding" of technology and that of "adopting" it. Iranians may avoid the founding of technology and its cultural parent, subjectivity, by adopting and appropriating this illegitimate but attractive child of Europe,

Modern *technique* has already been founded but other nations, who have not been involved in its creation, can use Europe's experience and appropriated and borrow science and modern technology. In other words, a distinction must be made between the founding of technology and its borrowing. If the tree

of modern *technique* cannot grow in a gnostic [*erfani*] intellectual environment, it cannot be concluded that gnostic thought destroys *technique* everywhere...the gnostic thought does not deprive mankind from amenities that technology has provided, rather liberates them from bondage to technology and objects (Davari 1994, 141-2).

Davari has contended that this approach toward technology would not result in a renewed dependence of Iran on the West (Davari 1994 137). Presuming that his assumption is correct, however, one may ask whether this attitude would not lead again to the prevalence of positivist subjectivity without the cultural aspects of subjectivity to insure democratic institutions to check positivism. Davari's answer to this hypothetical question would be in the negative, because in the West itself, where all aspects of subjectivity have existed more or less together, there are currently profound changes taking place. The collapse of the Soviet Union (intellectually a part of the West) and the lack of enthusiasm in Western thought for modernity, all portend the collapse of the rest of modern civilization also,

Today the conditions of the West have changed. That means there is nothing in Western thought to advance the power of the West and modernity any longer. The Soviet Union with all its territory, population and God-given natural resources, is abolished. The West also, like Soviet Union has lost its endurance and longevity. The West has no more hope in the future and its thinkers view philosophy as finished off and talk of the end of modernity. They have called the contemporary period the 'limbo' of postmodernity, which is the shaking of the foundations of modernity before the start of a new era (Davari 1994, 18).

Politics of the Leap (in)to Haq

If Davari has been somewhat receptive toward science and technology of modernity, he has been much less sympathetic toward other aspects of modernity such as political institutions and norms. As a being belonging and subordinated to the Truth, our human polity is determined by God. As it was the case in this golden age of early Islam, the Islamic government is neither a democracy nor despotic, but the rulers executed the Divine laws (Davari 1982, 100). Moreover, Davari has averred, such notions as rights and (modern) politics are grounded on "Western reason," and the latter in turn is grounded on the accursed humanism and subjectivity (Davari 1982, 84). This anti-liberal position has led Davari to criticize the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of the early twentieth century as the realization of the ideas of Westoxicated Iranian intellectuals of the period (Davari 1982, 94). He has correctly pointed to the weak social roots of the democratic ideas and institutions that the Constitutional Revolution was promising to establish in Iran, and its actual failure, but he has expressed no regrets for this sad outcome. He has referred to the Constitutional Revolution as a foreign "sapling" which never developed roots in Iran and became increasingly wilted, "until its dried root had to be uprooted and thrown away." (Davari 1982, 96). More importantly, Davari has suggested, the popular uprising at the time of the Constitutional Revolution was not for democracy, but merely against the despotism of the Qajar Shahs, implying the irrelevance of democratic institutions in a religious society (Davari 1982, 99).

Davari's anti-democratic sentiments are not confined to Iranian borders as he has attacked the principle of the freedom of religious beliefs in the Declaration of Human Rights, along with many of the institutions of modernity,

The freedom of religious beliefs in the Declaration of Human Rights means alienation from religion; it means leaving the individuals to their own devices so that they may do whatever they want with religion in their private lives and have any religion they want...modern man sees his own image in the mirror of Haq and instead of entering into a Covenant with Haq, he has entered into a covenant with himself. Therefore it is inevitable and natural that such a man would turn his back to religion and cover up his act with claims to nationalism, internationalism, liberalism, collectivism and individualism (Davari 1982, 52).

Faithful to the anti-subjectivist ontology in his discourse, Davari has articulated thinly disguised sentiments against literacy projects in a country like Iran where still a large proportion of the population suffers from illiteracy,

Assuming that literacy programs and other similar projects are practical and simple, it does not mean that illiterate people in the world cause wars...Beware of the abuse of the knowledge and the practice which results in the eclipse of Haq (Davari 1982, 139-40).

In a similar vein, as I mentioned before, Davari's ontology has led him to dismiss the anti-imperialist struggles of other nations as either futile or at best resulting in the assimilation of the anti-imperialist struggle to the oppressor, since these struggles are also grounded in human subjectivity and modernity (Davari 1982, 172-

4). The only true and effective anti-imperialist campaign is the one which aims at the root of the problem, that is the notion and practice of human autonomy, which the Islamic movement in Iran has embarked upon (Davari 1982, 175).

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Fully in agreement with his ontology of the Haq, Davari believes that there should not be any separation between religion and politics (Davari 1982, 225-6). This position has led him to support the doctrine of "Governance of the Jurist" which has served as the ideological mainstay of the clerical rule and the anti-democratic institutions of the Islamic government in the post-revolutionary era. In his declared support for the doctrine of the Governance of the Jurist, however, Davari has been careful to distinguish between a despotic clerical rule and what he considers to be the execution of the Divine mandate,

Islamic polity is the exercise of the Divine Sovereignty and this can be accomplished by those who are not only experts in the knowledge and practice of religious laws, but also those who, in their closeness to the Haq, their eyes, ears, tongues and hands have become His eyes, ears, tongue and hands. The Islamic

government is the government of the "confidants" [*olya*] of God, whereas the prevalent meaning of politics is the management of social and economic affairs in which man is viewed as a being whose existence is the aggregation of material and mundane needs and abilities (Davari 1982, 254).

In a different article in the same book where the above appeared, Davari has distinguished between the regime of the "Governance of the Jurist" and totalitarian systems. In general, he has differentiated between two types of rules. One is exercised by humans over humans and the other is the sovereignty of God (*Haq*) over humans. In the first case if the rule is that of one or a few individuals over the collectivity, it would be despotism and if it is the rule of the majority over the collectivity it is democracy. In both instances, the despotic and democratic forms of government, what matters is the rule of human desires, appetites (*ahva*.) and the "sovereignty of technique," in which in the current world is engulfed. In the case of Divine sovereignty, its human representation, that is the theocratic state, is on the one hand obedient to God and has guardianship over the people, and on the other hand is their servant. However, Davari is aware of the close affinity between a theocratic state and despotism and has warned that, "it is possible that some individuals or groups, in the name of religious government, take to despotism and oppression...in which case the government is despotic and it is one of the worst forms of despotism. Therefore, the truth of the

'Governance of the Jurist' is not despotism, as it can not be compared to the democracy either" (Davari 1982, 174-6).⁴

Shortly after the revolution of 1979, the question of the nation-state vs the larger Islamic state along with the issue of the type of sovereignty, that of Divine or national/popular sovereignty, became a major source of political debate in Iran. Davari addressed these issues in two books on nationalism, national sovereignty and revolution. In an essay entitled "The Essence and Forms of Nationalism," Davari has attacked the notion civic nationalism -- based on the idea of universalizable subjectivity--because of its subjectivist element,

From its very beginning [in Europe,] nationalism meant that the populace should be independent of any force in their exercise of power, creation of laws and norms and the control of social relations and transactions. And because in that period the established power was the Church and its rule, nationalism was instituted in opposition to the Church. But what was the source of this spirit of independence, and how man found the courage and the strength to rebel against the Church which he considered the shadow of the heavens? We might say that this spirit of independence emerged shortly after man considered himself the center of the universe and the source of knowledge, power and will; when a revolution took place in the political, social, economic as well as in the intellectual sphere (Davari 1985, 22).

In the same article Davari has assailed the right of the individuals as individuals, or even as a collectivity, to participate in government

⁴ Other proponents of anti-subjectivist discourse have expressed views on the doctrine of the "Governance of Jurist" which are much less sophisticated than those of Davari. Shahriyar Zarshenas, for example, has unequivocally supported the notion of political rule by the clerics without discussing the possibility of despotism in his discourse. See Zarshenas 1992, 51-2.

and the process of governing themselves as an "innovation," brought about by the anthropocentrism of modernity and closely tied to the notions of national sovereignty and nationalism (Davari 1985, 20).

In another essay in the same book Davari has explicitly rejected the notion of popular and national sovereignty,

[N]ational sovereignty and a constitution in their origin and essence are incompatible with religion since the chief principle of all constitutions is based on a [notion] that sovereignty derives from people's will and the people must legislate, whereas in religion sovereignty belongs to God and the rulers [merely] execute Divine ordinances (Davari 1985, 163).

Davari has even warned that those pronouncements of Khomeini on topics of social participation against oppression must not be interpreted as encouraging the notion of national sovereignty (Davari 1985, 42). It is important, however, to note that Davari has also rejected the "*ipseism*" of nationalistic movements and sentiments which may result in chauvinistic nationalism (Davari 1985, 23).

As we saw before, with regard to modern science and technology, Davari, apparently as a result of social pressure, has retreated from some of his earlier radical positions. On other issues he has also made some concessions, but they seem to be mostly rhetorical in nature. On the question of freedom and equality, for example, he has stated a belief in their "roots in human nature". But at the same time he has dismissed "modern" notions of freedom and equality because of their anthropocentric roots in the Renaissance (Davari, 1994, 53-4). In another essay he has made a distinction between freedom and what he has labeled the "license" (*ebaheh*) of liberalism (Davari 1994,

484). These vague and mostly rhetorical maneuvers notwithstanding, Davari has not made any substantial change in his persistent and anti-subjectivist discourse.

The above persistence in the basic tenets of Davari's discourse is above all reflected in his polemics against his opponents, primarily Abdolkarim Sorush. In many magazine articles and articles published in his books, Davari has criticized and opposed Sorush on many topics. All in all, if one may describe Davari's discourse in terms of an effort in the direction of contraction of subjectivity and reason, Sorush's discourse is best described as an expansion of subjectivity and even a liberation from the confines of mediated subjectivity, the paradigm in which it nevertheless originated.

Sorush: The Expansion of Mediated Subjectivity

Abdolkarim Sorush, which is a pen name, was born as Hussein Hajfaraj Dabagh in a lower middle class family in south Tehran in 1945. For his secondary school education he attended Alavai High School which had just been established by pious Bazari merchants. The Alavai School was established in order to provide a curriculum rich in modern science as well as emphasizing a religious environment and curriculum. For his higher education Sorush attended Tehran University and studied pharmacology. After completing his degree, he spent two years in the army completing national service, and after that he was sent to Bushehr to render part of his medical service. Soon thereafter, he left for London to pursue his education.

At the university of London he first studied analytical chemistry but later developed an interest in philosophy and history of science. he finished his dissertation on the subject of the history monomolecular reactions (Boroujerdi 1996, 158). With the start of the revolution, Sorush returned to Iran and published his first socio-political works. After the revolution Sorush served at some of the highest echelons of the cultural apparatuses of the Islamic Republic. He was appointed to the High Council of the Cultural Revolution which was charged with the task of revamping and Islamicizing the entire education system in Iran shortly after the revolution. Sorush has also taught philosophy and philosophy of science at the University of Tehran, as well as conducting research at the Institute for Cultural Research and Studies (Boroujerdi 1996, 158-9). Since 1995, however, Sorush has come under severe attacks, at times physical, by some elements among the conservative Islamic forces.

Eschewing the Metaphysical Path to Subjectivity

Sorush's earliest book published in 1978, just before the triumph of Islamic revolution, bore the title of, *A Critique and Introduction to Dialectics* (*Naqdi va Moqadamei bar Tazad-e Dialikitik*). In this book, which has been reprinted several times, Sorush criticized the "dialectical method" and the cosmologies associated with it for being rigid and not lending themselves to critique or revision. Instead he advocated the Popperian method, based on the notion of 'falisifiability,' because of its purported flexibility and fluidity. But Sorush went even further and charged that the dialectical method was grounded in the metaphysical approach and as such

inappropriate for a valid understanding of the world and social events. In the same book Sorush criticized a version of the "journey to subjectivity" articulated by Abdolhasan Banisadre, who was destined to become the ill-fated first president of the Islamic Republic (Sorush 1994a[1978], 140).⁵

In his other works, Sorush has faulted the notion of a human journey toward theomorphism which, as we saw in chapter five, constituted one of the important ontological bases of the Islamic revolutionary discourses of the pre-revolutionary era, in the 1960s and 70s. In an article originally published in the magazine *Kayhan Farhangi* in 1985 and later reprinted in his book *Tafroj-e Son'* (literary meaning the Excursion of Creation), Sorush criticized the notion of humans as a "becoming-toward-perfection" (Sorush 1987, 263). In the same article, obliquely criticizing the expectation of moral perfection by citizens, Sorush has blamed the Islamic government of setting unrealistically high moral standards for Iranians. He has advised government officials that the first lesson for managing a polity is tolerance for human imperfection (Sorush 1987, 265-6). In another essay he has denied that the mission of the prophets has been to elevate humans to perfection,

The prophets were not sent to angels and they did not view humans as imperfect angels so that they would transform them to perfect angels. Man is man and he is not to be transformed into an angel (Sorush 1984, 62).

⁵ I have discussed the notion of "journey to subjectivity" in chapter five.

In yet another essay Sorush has warned against the desire on the part of humans to achieve the status of divinity as the first step toward corruption and evil (Sorush 1984, 158). He has also warned that the application of the notion of human perfectibility and theomorphism to the political sphere may result in particular privileges on the part of some individuals to accord themselves special rights as the vicegerent of God on earth (Sorush 1984, 171).

Thus it seems that Sorush's eschewing of the path to metaphysics and theomorphism which constituted an essential aspect of Shariati, Motahhari and even Khomeini, is motivated by the post-revolutionary political developments such as the Islamic regime's intolerance for human imperfection, manifested in rigid moral requirements, as well as the elitist monopolization of political power by the clerics. However, one more motivation may be added to Sorush's eschewing of the metaphysical path. The "journey toward subjectivity" which I delineated in the last chapter, albeit strongly rooted in Islamic metaphysics could not develop any further in a religious society like Iran. Such a development would have meant the negation of other moments of religious belief and would create a strong reaction. Indeed Davari's discourse is partially the embodiment of this reaction. As a result, Sorush, or any one else for that matter, could not have further developed the logic of the mediated subjectivity contained in this metaphysical path to theomorphism. It has thus been necessary for Sorush to take a detour to avoid the cul de sac that would have confronted him.

Epistemological Detour: Knowledge of Religion as the Object of Subjectivity

In an article published in 1992 in the weekly journal *Kayhan* Havai, Sorush has identified the "essence" of modernity as the emergence of certain new knowledges that did not exist before (Sorush 1992, 12). These include modern ethics, sociology of religion, philology, and the study of tradition and ideology. These new knowledges have created an unbridgeable gap between modern humans on the one hand, and the ancients and the world of "objects" on the other (Sorush 1992, 12). In this way Sorush has substituted a detour for the direct "metaphysical" discussion of subjectivity by emphasizing epistemological dimensions of the knowing subject. To this subjectivist epistemology Sorush has added a hermeneutic element and has analogized the external world to a text in need of interpretation,

Analogizing the external world to a written text is an eloquent simile. This means that no text reveals its meaning. It is the mind of the philologist which reads the meaning in the text. Phrases are "hungry" for meanings. They are not pregnant with meaning, albeit they are not satisfied with any food either.

Accordingly, the meanings of the phenomenon are not written on them and are not obtained by simple looking. The observer must know the "language" of the world to read and understand. Science and philosophy teach us this language (or languages). And these languages are neither stagnant nor perfect, but in constant transformation (Sorush 1991, 192).

In a related vein, Sorush has argued that our understanding of the world is necessarily historical, since social and human institutions, "instead of being fixed by nature are fluid" and we can only truly

observe them when we, "sit at their ontological stream and watch their flow." (Sorush, 1991, 198).

Most significantly, in what is probably the most important book he has published, The Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of the Sharia (Oabz va Bast-e Teoriki-e Shariat.) Sorush has applied this subjectivist approach to knowledge, to our understanding of religion and sacred data,

As no understanding of nature is ever complete, and always enriched by newer scientific works and the arrival of competing views and historical developments, so are understandings of religion. This applies both to Jurisprudential [*Feqhī*] views as well as convictions and beliefs [*nazariyat-e e'teqadi va usuli*]. Muslim's understanding of God, Resurrection, Providence [*qaza va qadar*] reveal some of their meanings in theory and practice [gradually]. Similarly, Jurisprudential views such as the "Governance of the Jurist" and the[Quranic precept of] the "Injunction to Do Good and Avoid Evil," etc., reveal their exact meanings in the historical process (Sorush 1991, 214-15).

In this interpretive approach toward religion, Sorush has repeatedly pointed out that our knowledge of religion is contingent upon other human knowledges that emerge historically. He has argued that religious knowledge which is derived form the, "Book, the Tradition and the Biography of religious leaders," is a "consumerist" type of knowledge and as such directly influenced by "productive" knowledges (i.e., physical and social sciences as well as philosophy and humanities). There are no religious knowledges which are not contingent upon these "external" and human knowledges, and since the latter are always in flux, the former will also change (Sorush

1991, 79-80). Furthermore, Sorush has argued, there is a close relationship between modern philosophical anthropology(i.e., modern view of humans) and our knowledge of nature, epistemology and religious knowledge as they constitute the "parts of a circle." (Sorush 1991, 88). As a result, the style of religiosity is different in each epoch and religious knowledge; is subject to "contraction and expansion" in different individuals and different periods depending on the changes in human knowledges of the time (Sorush 1991, 89). The contingency of the religious knowledges upon other human knowledge, in Sorush's view, even applies to the words of God,

The discovery of the innermost [meanings] of the words of God,...is directly contingent upon the development of human knowledge [*ma'aref-e bashari*], including the mystical, philosophical and scientific knowledges (Sorush 1991, 203).

At this point it is important to note that Sorush has made a crucial distinction between the "religion-in-itself" and our understanding or "knowledge of religion". The essence of "religion- in-itself" which is a Divine creation is constant and not subject to change. But our understanding or comprehension of religion which leads to religious knowledge is a human phenomenon and as such subject to change and interpretation (Sorush 1992, 42).

In fact it seems Sorush has made a distinction between the two categories along the same lines of Kantian distinction between the noumena and phenomena. In this distinction, "religion is sacred and heavenly, but knowledge of religion is mundane and human. What remains fixed is religion, but what changes is religious knowledge," (Sorush 1991, XI). This approach, Sorush claims, allows the

reconciliation between what is "eternal," and sacred on the one hand, and change and what is profane, on the other hand, which would result in the revival of Islam and its harmony with the (modern) age (Sorush 1991, X). Thus Sorush has claimed that his theory of "contraction and expansion" may reconcile tradition and change, the "earth" and the "sky" as well as "reason" and "revolution" (Sorush 1991, IX). He has repeatedly described religion in itself as "silent" (*samet*) and in need of human interpretation which constitutes our knowledge of religion. He has even gone as far as claiming that what Imam Ali understood of God could be different from our contemporary understanding of the Divine Essence (Sorush 1991,45).

Based on those theoretical constructs, Sorush has advocated the notion of a "dynamic jurisprudence" (*fiqh puya*) as opposed to the traditional jurisprudence of the conservatives. In his view only this dynamic jurisprudence can provide solutions to some of the practical problems that the Islamic regime has faced in its encounter with modernity. Problems that are rooted in the clerical regime's conflict with the modern juridical sphere, economics, culture, arts, media and so on (Sorush 1988, 51). Based on his epistemology, Sorush has attempted a reconciliation between religiosity and *roshanfekri*. In his view a religious *roshanfekri* --an oxymoron from the viewpoint of the conservatives-- is possible considering the epistemological dichotomy, and the simultaneous dialogue, between the inner essence of religion and human understanding of it.⁶

⁶ In his book, Roshanfekri and Religiosity (*Rushanfekri va Dindari*) (1988,) Sorush has attempted to achieve a reconciliation between the two sides of one of the largest cultural chasm in the second half of the twentieth century in Iran.

It is my contention here that what Sorush has been striving for in his theoretical efforts is nothing less than an epistemological subjectivity in which the human subject treats the "religious knowledge" as the object of subjectivity. In conformity with his eschewing of metaphysics, for the reasons I explained in the previous section, Sorush does not usually refer to the concept of human vicegerency and the Islamic concept of the human as God's successor on earth. Instead of such a direct approach to human subjectivity, Sorush has emphasized the Quranic grounding of human vicegerency in "knowledge" (Sorush 1984, 48).⁷

I mentioned before that Sorush does not pursue the "metaphysical" path to subjectivity which his predecessors, Sharati, Motahhari and even Khomeini had developed earlier. But this does not mean his discourse stays clear of the notion of human subjectivity. To be sure he rarely refers to Quranic verses for this purpose, but rather invokes the mystical tradition, especially the poetry of Rumi(d.1273) for this purpose (Sorush 1987, 146-8). In fact, in some of his writings, Sorush has displayed a vacillation between positing and negating human subjectivity similar to what was the characteristic of the mediated subjectivity of the revolutionary discourse of Motahhari, Shariati and Khomeini. He goes through many of the vacillations regarding human free will vs necessitarianism and other related issues that I discussed in chapter five and need not be repeated here. Suffice to say that his

⁷ In addition to treating the "religious knowledge" as the object of the interpretation by the human agent, Sorush has suggested the same attitude in treating the contents of historical data as an object of interpretation by active human agency (Sorush 1991, 162).

ambivalences and oscillations are much more subdued compared to his predecessors, and in his argument against Davari's type of discourse, he posits an ontology of human subjectivity more or less unequivocally.⁸

As I mentioned before, Sorush's methodology and even discourse in general is, by his own admission, much indebted to that of Karl Popper. Sorush finds the "probabilistic" modern science that he reads in Popper, much more compatible with the principles of a democratic society and polity, than the "absolutist philosophy" of ancients (Sorush 1995, 14). Given his training in the philosophy of history and science, it seems natural that Sorush's detour to subjectivity passes through the realm of modern sciences. For this reason we need to examine Sorush's discourse with regard to its relations with modern sciences and positivism.

Social Construction of Probabilistic Science

Utilizing the purported contingent nature of Popper's notion of "falsifiability" as the validating cornerstone of modern science, Sorush has advanced a view of science which is much more "probabilistic" than positivistic and absolute. He has, for example criticized the Marxist groups in Iran for the rigidity of their thoughts based on Dialectical Materialism and proposed an epistemology grounded in the notion of Popperian falsifiability (Sorush 1994a [1978], 132). Sorush has dismissed the charges of positivism attributed to the Popperian methodology by stating that what

⁸ See, for example Sorush (1987, 295) where Sorush rejecting Davari's "philosophy of Being" and discusses different aspects of human agency and subjectivity with regards to nature.

constitutes positivism in traditional scientific methodology is the insistence on the notion of "verifiability" and induction, both of which the Popperian methodology has disavowed and overcome (Sorush 1994a [1978], 177).

Another utility that Sorush has found in a scientific methodology seems to be a means to resist the fanaticism and obscurantism of some of the religious conservative forces who gained power after the Islamic revolution. Invoking the European experience in fighting religious fanaticism, Sorush has warned that,

the story of Galileo should not be repeated in the Islamic Republic...We do not want what happened to Galileo, take place in this country and under the aegis of the Islamic Republic. That means we do not want religion to be an impediment to science (Sorush 1987, 196).

Sorush has warned against those conservative elements who in the name of struggle against "cultural imperialism" have tried to stamp out humanistic culture from Iran since the revolution by such desperate measures as closing the universities and waging war against all modern foreign and domestic cultural products such as video tapes and satellite reception. In this respect Sorush has cautioned the Iranians not to deprive themselves of the fruits of the achievements of others,

[W]e do not wish to deprive ourselves from the achievements of others...we believe that the [fruits] of humanity's thought are valuable and needed by all of humanity, unless thorough critique some of these [thoughts] may be falsified. Therefore the principle should not be to close the doors upon ourselves, not using other's thoughts. On the contrary, the principle

is to not deprive ourselves of others' thoughts (Sorush 1987, 195).

Even "human sciences" can not be divided into Eastern or Western and dismissed because of their origins,

Our first thought about human sciences is that we should reflect on those sciences, instead of writing them off merely because they come from the East or the West. If someone believes that "thought" is dependent upon geography or historical periodization, s/he does not understand thought. Thought makes history... (Sorush 1987, 191).

Sorush's insistence upon the scientific method also emanates from his efforts to reduce the over-ideologization of most spheres of social life after the Islamic Revolution. By maintaining an unbridgeable gap between science and valuation, Sorush has attempted to promote the purported neutrality of science to remedy the heavy handed reliance on ideology in post-revolutionary social sciences in Iran (Sorush 1994a [1978], 173). Aware of the heightened sensitivity of the religious elements to the secular culture of modernity and at the same realizing the indispensability of modern human knowledges, Sorush seems to have taken refuge in the putative neutrality of natural sciences (Sorush 1994a [1978], 197).

Given Sorush's educational background and his location in the positivistic cultural milieu of the Pahlavi era, it is not surprising that at times Sorush had displayed some strong gravitation toward positivism.⁹ Nevertheless, Sorush's general tendency has been to

⁹ For example, Sorush has maintained that the strongest impetus for social change emanates from natural sciences which influence humanities and other "human sciences", including religion. (Sorush 1991, 233).

distance himself from positivism, while maintaining a strong confidence in natural sciences. He has done so, as we just saw, by incorporating Popper's notion of "falsifiability" in methodology of science, as well as subscribing to a conception of science as social construction. For this purpose, in his book The Excursion of Creation, Sorush has referred to Wittgenstein's dictum regarding the impossibility of a private language and the dialogical, social and participatory nature of language (Sorush 1987, 301). He has also cited Peter Winch and supported his view of the inter-subjective construction of social norms and institutions,

Peter Winch believes that man's life is entirely comprised of conventions and agreements that he creates, consents to and practices, or cancels them and replaces them with other norms. Social institutions are nothing but social conventions...[These conventions include categories] such as marriage, ownership, superintendence [*riyasat*], honor, insult, voting, punishment, reward, etc. One of the most obvious and most visible conventions is language itself and as we saw if people have private languages...social life becomes impossible. Language is a convention that is a social construct...Language is a paradigm and a model for Mr. Winch and he believes that understanding in society and social behavior is similar to [the process of] understanding in a language. That means the model for social sciences must be language (Sorush 1987, 45).

Based on these observations, Sorush has extrapolated these premises to the natural sciences and declared that, "The objectivity of science depends on its being public." (Sorush 1987, 51). In the same book, Sorush has referred to the discursive nature of the construction of science and its "social identity." "What exists only in the mind of an isolated thinker," Sorush has declared "is not science."

"Science must lift the veil from its face and expose itself to the judgment and critique of others. What constitutes science is the product of public critique and understanding as well as the meanings given to terms by the scientific community." (Sorush 1987, 177). Based on these premises, Sorush has advocated the free exchange of different viewpoints and ideas which may be conceived as an alternative for the attainment of "Truth"-- a proposition quite different from what Davari and his cohorts consider "Truth" to be-- with significant social and political implications (Sorush 1987, 184-5).¹⁰

The Secular Ramifications of Sorush's Thought

Sorush's discourse and his circuitous path to posit a form of human subjectivity entails certain potentials for secularization which need to be examined in some detail. In his book Roshanfekri and Religiosity, Sorush has discussed Ali Shariati's work and its effect on secularization of religion. As if addressing his own critics, Sorush has asked rhetorically, How Shariati would not be positively affected by the ideas of Voltaire, Descartes and Sartre, given his familiarity with the obscurantism of the Church in medieval Europe? (Sorush 1988, 79). Interestingly, this observation seems to apply to the disenchanting effects of his own writings also. As we saw before Sorush argued that religious knowledge is contingent upon the other knowledges that are available in a given period. Based on this, he has implied the recognition of a secular cosmology embodied in

¹⁰ Another indication of Sorush's dissociation from positivism is his critique of behaviorism and the "stimulus-response" paradigms in social sciences. see Sorush 1987, 68.

modern philosophical anthropology, and sociology as the standard to validate religious cosmologies and the search for a religiosity which is "attentive" to human needs (Sorush 1991, 109). He has even gone as far as claiming that,

Values and responsibilities (good and evil)...and conventions (language, customs, etc.) are characterized [by the fact that] they do not inhere in Truth, and change by human decision. They are not universal or eternal...they are not true or false (Sorush 1994a [1978], 185).

In a similar way, Sorush has viewed the notion of Divine Providence in terms of human subjectivity,

History is not dependent on an "external sphere". No hand from outside diverts it and there is no [external] force over history. This is true even with regards to a Divine view of history...God's actions are realized through the agency of the natural dispositions of beings, or [in case of humans,] their wills... Men have lived in history as their humanness has necessitated and what has occurred in history has been natural and there has been no cause except men's humanness giving rise to historical events...(Sorush 1987, 261).

In his more recent articles published in magazines such as Kiyan, Sorush has cast a shadow of doubt on hitherto absolute and determined categories such as ethics. In article in the monthly magazine Kiyan published in 1994, Sorush has claimed that absolute ethics only belongs to gods and not to the human sphere. Ethics, he has maintained, is not an exact and systemic science and will never reach an ideal precision and rigor (Sorush 1994b, 23). Even if we assume that good and evil are absolute, we cannot determine what

course of action the subject must take in difficult ethical crossroads (Sorush 1994b, 23). Furthermore, ethics like other categories of knowledge is as much subject to temporal and spatial consideration and as such its injunctions are not absolute and eternal (Sorush 1994b, 23). As an important thesis in this article Sorush has stated that, "ethics, therefore, is contingent on life and must befit it, not vice-versa" (Sorush 1994b, 25). In this article Sorush has also assailed the "transcendental" and absolutist ethics of the revolutionary period and its tragic consequences and as an alternative has proposed a conceptualization of ethics based on "exceptional" and fluid principles (Sorush 1994b, 26-30).

One of the most important concepts that Sorush has repeatedly thematized is the notion of "temporalizing religion" (*asri kardan-e din*). Based on his earlier notion of the contingency of religious knowledge on other secular and human knowledges of the period, Sorush has argued that not only life and the "age" should become religious, but also religion must become temporal and humanized, an idea which seems only inevitable in the aftermath of the revolution of subjectivity (Sorush 1991, 215).

Expansion of Political Philosophy

There is no doubt that Sorush has been one of the key contributors to the expansion of the horizons of political philosophy in the post-revolutionary Iran despite his relatively minor ontological vacillations.¹¹ However, in his political discourse, Sorush

¹¹ It cannot be overemphasized that Sorush too, like his predecessors in Islamic discourse is afflicted by some oscillation between affirmation and

has been even more homogeneous in his support for political democracy. Sorush has exposed the totalitarian tendencies in the discourse of his religious opponents and criticized the moral sclerosis which seized Iran after the revolution. In this respect Sorush has warned against the populist rhetoric inherent in a discourse like Davari's and championed the cause of "critical reason" against what he deems to be the demagoguery of "mass society" (Sorush 1996a, 67).

The cornerstone of Sorush's political discourse seems to be "faith", a concept that as we saw in chapter five was elaborated upon by Shariati. But in Sorush's case, faith belongs to the individual. In an article published in Kiyan, Sorush has argued that the faith of an individual can be possible only if she or he is free to choose. Consequently, Sorush has argued, faith and freedom constitute two inseparable categories which can lay the foundations of a religious democracy,

The faith of each individual is the exclusive experience and the "private property" of that individual. Each of us finds faith as an individual, as we die as an individual. There may be collective rituals but there is no collective faith...The realm of faith is the realm of resurrection, and in resurrection people come as individuals...True faith is based on individuality and freedom...The foundation of religious community is consented faith. [Moreover], not only faith cannot be forced, it can not be homogenized either, and to the extent that people have different personalities, faiths are also variegated and nuanced ... (Sorush 1994c, 7).

negation of human subjectivity, but his fluctuation is much more subdued and hence his discourse much less contradictory.

Sorush has made a distinction between a liberal democracy and a secular society on the one hand, and a "religious democracy" with pluralistic principles, on the other. In a liberal democracy, according to him, the freedom of "inclinations" (*amyal*) and desires is the foundation of pluralism and secular society, but a "religious democracy" may be built on the basis of freedom of faith (Sorush 1994c, 8). In another article published in the magazine *Kiyan* Sorush has identified one of the main tasks of a democratic religious state to be the protection of the freedom of faith and creation of a social condition conducive to such freedom (Sorush 1996b, 39).¹²

Congruent with these premises, Sorush has placed a special emphasis on the idea of human freedom in the more overtly political aspect of this discourse,

Freedom is prior to everything. I have recently come across some speakers in our society who, in the way of criticism and reproach, have said, "for some [i.e., for Sorush] freedom is a foundation." Yes, why shouldn't freedom be a foundation? Even if we accept religion, submissiveness and obedience, we do so because we have freely chosen them (Sorush 1996c, 253).¹³

¹² In his more theoretical and abstract writings Sorush has considered only the individual as "real" and the collectivity as a theoretical construct whose reality is merely hypothetical. This ontological priority of the individual over the collectivity seems to be the grounding of his later political writings in which the individual is central. See Sorush 1994 [1978], 79. If one is concerned that by his emphasis on the individual, Sorush has careened the ideal balance between individual subjectivity and universality and collectivity, one must remember that Sorush's discourse by being located in the Islamic tradition is already heavily universalistic and any movement against it, is in the direction of a balance between these two pillars of modernity.

¹³ By emphasizing this idea of freedom, Sorush has been careful not to neglect the concept of social justice. He has written in the same article, "The conflict that some have projected between freedom and justice (under the rubric of the conflict between democracy and socialism), that if we choose freedom, justice is destroyed and if we pick justice, freedom is sacrificed, is a spurious conflict." (Sorush 1996c, 254)

Sorush has grounded his notion of human freedom in thought and reason. And as such, he has argued that "emotionally" based action leads to the surrender of the individuality of the individual to the "other". It may be true, Sorush has argued, that reason might engender antagonism and conflict, but its principle outcome is independence and that prevents the surrender of one's subjectivity to the other (Sorush 1996c, 254). In this respect Sorush has approached some of the Frankfurt School's analysis of fascism and he has even referred to the concept of "Escape from Freedom" by Fromm (Sorush 1996c, 247). This position has led Sorush to criticize the power of ideology in post-revolutionary Iran and recommended freedom of convictions and beliefs,

Freedom of beliefs is the legitimate offspring of epistemological falsifiability, which has encircled the prevalent dogmatic thinking of bygone times. The difference between the modern and the old world is the difference between certainty and uncertainty, and this difference led to the humans' transcending ideology in the modern world, whereas in the old world, convictions were always prior to humans. Humans were both killed and killed for their convictions, but today people are not victims of intolerance because of their convictions which is considered against human rights (Sorush 1996d, 273).¹⁴

From early on in his career, Sorush has criticized the concept of the 'Governance of the Jurist", at first obliquely, but later

¹⁴ As it is a peculiarity of mediated subjectivity from which Sorush's discourse originates, while Sorush has been a strong supporter of freedom of individual subjectivity, he has upheld the necessity of the veil (*hejab*) for women. (Sorush 1982, 101)

increasingly more openly and directly. In recent articles published in the magazine *Kiyan*, Sorush has revealed the incompatibility of the concept and institution of clerical rule enshrined in the notion of the "Governance of the Jurist". He has pointed out the since the Governing Jurist derives his right to rule from God, not much is left for the populace in the arena of governing. "At most" he has written, people's role is, "to discover who has this right [to rule]." (Sorush 1996b, 5). Sorush has also appealed to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic which has allowed for the convening of an "Assembly of Experts" charged with overseeing the selection of the "Governor Jurist," and in case of later incompetence his dismissal. He has argued that since the Assembly of Experts is elected by popular vote and since the "Governor Jurist," as the highest power in the Islamic Republic, derives his legitimacy from this assembly, the sovereignty of Iranian people is guaranteed, if not directly at least implicitly, by the Constitution. And once people's sovereignty is recognized it can not be partial and thus full sovereignty, even over the position of the Governing Supreme Jurist, belongs to the people (Sorush 1996b, 5). On this basis Sorush has posited the notion of popular sovereignty overriding that of the so-called Supreme Jurist(*Vali-e Faqih*),

If you have the right to oversee the government, it can easily be demonstrated that you also have the right to govern...As soon as the right is released it will occupy all the space. Without a doubt the foundation of the democratic government is that people constitute the "principle" in it. That means people are the creator, the critic and observer of the government (Sorush 1996b, 5).

In connection with his conceptualization of a religious democratic state, Sorush has emphasized the concept of mutual rights and responsibilities. He has observed that, in contrast to traditional society where the emphasis is on responsibilities instead of rights, in a democratic society, rights and mutual rights as responsibilities are stressed. Further, as Imam Alf has demonstrated, Sorush has argued, mutual rights is most significant in the relations between the citizens and the state (Sorush 1984, 209-13).

As we saw above, Sorush has posited the notion of a religious democracy, distinct from liberal democracy, a distinction which is grounded on the putative differences between freedom of faith and freedom of inclination respectively. Both societies are founded upon respect for individual freedom but in the former freedom derives from the free choice of faith and in the latter from liberty in inclination and desire. Accordingly, Sorush has associated "liberalism" with lack of faith and a society in which religion is deliberately put under siege, and a society in which, in order to establish human rights, the "rights of God" are abandoned.¹⁵

By contrast, in a religious democratic society, both human rights and the rights of God are respected (Sorush 1996d, 273-4). It is significant that in his theorizing on the concept of a religious democratic state, Sorush has asserted that, in contrast to some Islamic thinkers' discussion of democracy, he would not start from Islamic principle such as *Shura* (Consultation) or *Ijma* (Consensus) or *Bey'a* (Contract), he would ground his theory of religious democracy in such concepts as human rights, justice and delimitation of power

¹⁵ Sorush has not provided an example for this type of "liberal" society.

(Sorush 1994c, 3). Moreover, in his scheme for religious democracy, "reason" which is socially grounded and therefore fluid, constitutes the foundations on which this democratic religious state would operate. As Sorush has put it in his rather arcane language,

[A]n unjust rule is not religious and the foundation of justice is the fulfillment of the needs of the people and realization of their rights and elimination of discrimination and oppression. Therefore there is a stable connection between justice and human rights...and since justice is an extra-religious category...therefore the discovering of just methods of government, distribution and limitation of power and the areas of human rights will primarily have their roots in reason and not religion...[A]s a result of the emergence of reason, that is "fluid social reason" [*aql Jami'i sayal*]...the road for the appearance of an epistemological pluralism, which is the very foundation of democracy, would be paved (Sorush 1994c, 4).

In a democratic religious society based on these principles, Sorush has argued, there is no need for revolution and violence to limit the powers of the rulers, correct their policies and to elect and dismiss them. Separation of powers, universal education, empowerment and de-monopolization of the media, freedom of speech, existence of different free associations and checks and balances on power, freedom of political parties, public elections, a parliament, all constitutive mechanisms for achieving that goal. As such, Sorush has declared, democracy is not incompatible with religion:

The faithful abandoning their faiths and total laicization of religion and the undermining of its Divine foundation is not necessitated by democracy...What is incompatible with democracy is forced religiosity or punishment of "areligiosity" and if

these are, in some people's opinion, permissible in the "Theocratic" [*Feqhi*] government, in a democratic religious state, they are impossible and undesirable (Sorush 1994c, 4).

Sorush's insistence upon the distinction between liberal democracy and religious democracy notwithstanding, there seems to be little difference between this type of democratic polity and any other. Sorush himself seems to have recognized it when he stated that in his conceptualization of a religious state, "because people are religious, the state is religious and not because the state is religious people must become religious." (Sorush 1996b, 10). Furthermore, as far as the form of this type of state is concerned, Sorush himself has suggested, it is not different from other democratic states and the only difference is that only since the society is religious, therefore, "the state machinery would be in the service of the faithful." (Sorush 1996b, 11). In what may be surprising to some, Sorush has alluded to the United States as a possible model for a religious democratic society, by referring to the notion of American democracy as discussed by de Tocqueville, where even though religion and politics are separate, religion has been a guiding principle in American society and polity and where the ethics of universality in religion has a bearing on the harmony between the freedom of subjectivity and democracy (Sorush 1994c, 12).

Sorush is a political author and the evolution of his thought seems far from having reached an end. Yet his discourse seems to bear the promise of setting the stage for achieving subjectivity at a universal

level without, one must hope, falling into the trap of positivistic subjectivity again.

Conclusion

The transition to modernity has been a long and arduous process in the West. Far from being unilinear, this process has been marked by a tortuous path whose goal of the balance between the freedom of subjectivity and universality still seems, if not elusive, an ideal to be achieved. Yet after centuries that this process has been unfolding in the West, some of the fruits and banes of this yet unfinished modernity, such as the idea of citizenship, popular sovereignty, civil and personal freedoms and rights, higher material standard of living, as well as alienation, the threat of mass destruction and environmental damage, are visible and well established. The revolution of subjectivity as the underlying ontological foundation of modernity in its tormented path of development has left almost no part of the world untouched. Mostly in the form of brute colonization, economic exploitation and cultural objectification as well as the introduction of new ideas, norms and institutions, the modern West has changed the destiny of all societies on the globe. The response of many Third World countries to this reshaping of their destinies has been usually been expressed in the form of denial, reaction, emulation, infatuation, confrontation, resentment and often a mixture of these. The case of Iran has been no exception. In the past 150 years or so when Iran's--belated compared to many other nations-- destiny collided with that of Western modernity, these responses have all constituted the major elements of Iranian history.

However, the reactions of each country and people to the process of modernity has certain unique characteristics which can not be

generalized. In Iran's case this uniqueness seems to involve a preoccupation with the metaphysical foundations of modernity which has had important ramification for the more "superstructural" and institutional levels. Perhaps the roots of this peculiarity lies in Iran's deeply entrenched tradition of monotheism which goes back to its pre-Islamic religions as well as the relatively long continuity of Iranian sense of cultural identity which again goes beyond the Islamic period. This peculiarity is evidenced, for example, in the proto-modernist religious movements of Babism and the Bahai faith in the last century, the "liberal-democratic" movement in the beginning of the twentieth century which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, and, in the closing decades of the twentieth century, the establishment of a theocratic republic which is perhaps unique in human history. One of the most important consequences of the peculiar position of Iran in its experience with modernity has been its in-depth encounter with modernity which has enabled Iran to examine the foundations of modernity. The results of this process may be that the unfolding of modernity in Iran might prove to be more deeply rooted and profound, even though at the cost of partially reinventing the wheel of modernity and costly trial and error in establishing democratic principles. To be sure, what initiated the process of modernity in Iran was a reaction to imperialism in the mid nineteenth century as we saw in chapter three of the present study. However, Iran's encounter with modernity cannot be reduced to a mere reaction to imperialism. Rather it should be viewed as an "interactive" response of a people with a deep sense of cultural identity who has tapped into its

cultural resources in its encounter with an external stimulus. In the case of Iran these cultural resources include a rich tradition of metaphysics which constitute a quite close parallel to the metaphysical foundations of modernity in the West. Here, perhaps, lies the reasons for the profundity, and sometimes trouble, in the nature of Iran's unfolding process of modernity.

Many of the works on Iran are characterized by lamentations regarding the failures of the process of modernity and establishment of democratic institutions. These works view the eclipse of the democratic achievements of the Constitutional Revolution of 1907, which coincided with the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty, the defeat of the democratic nationalist movement led by Mossadeq in the early 1950's and the overtaking of the 1979 revolution by Islamic forces, merely as failures of the process of modernity to establish democracy in Iran. To be certain these were great setbacks for the process of modernity in Iran. Yet, the unfolding of modernity has never taken place along a straight path. As I try to demonstrate in chapter 3 and 4 of this study, the Constitutional Revolution, to a large extent, reflected the contradictory nature of appropriation of modernity in which both elements of positivist subjectivity and universalizable subjectivity were present. Universalizable subjectivity, manifested in the democratic institutions and universal participation envisioned by the Constitution Revolution, soon failed, as would be expected, mostly because of its weak roots in the cultural soil of Iran. But it was not the end of the experiment with modernity. In the aftermath of this failure, the Pahlavi regime took upon itself the task of establishing

positivist moments of subjectivity, while the opposition forces, the leftists, the liberal democrats and even the Islamic groups, were concerned with the issue of universality, its expansion and its deepening.

While the left in Iran set for itself the broad goals of universalizing and deepening subjectivity, its ultimate defect lay in its collectivist approach in universalization of subjectivity. Nevertheless the contributions of the left to the broadening of modern rights, however limited in nature, must not be neglected. The fact that in its early experience with modernity Iran lagged in universalistic principles, was responsible for the populist appeal of the left throughout the reigns of Pahlavi monarchs.

With the defeat of liberal-democracy and the left in the aftermath of the CIA sponsored coup d'état of 1953, the pursuit of the expansion and deepening of universality fell to the Islamist groups. The Islamic discourse of the 1960's and 70's carried on this task of populist and collectivist universality which the left and the liberal democratic forces were forced to abandon. This does not, however, mean that the category of subjectivity was totally discarded from the discourse from the Islamic movement of this period. Thus, as I tried to demonstrate in chapter 5, Islamic discourse incorporated the subjectivist element, but in a peculiar fashion which I have dubbed "mediated subjectivity." One of the characteristics of mediated subjectivity in the Islamic discourse has been a constant vacillation between affirmation and negation of human subjectivity. This characteristic has, in my view, constituted the ontological foundations of the political philosophy and the institutions of the Islamic

Republic which exhibit a similar combination of allowing rights of citizenship and denying them. Yet, two other features characterize the nature of this mediated subjectivity. One has been its enormous ability to universalize this inchoate subjectivity to the whole of society. The Islamic discourse in Iran has been the only discourse which has been able to achieve a sustained mobilization of the whole Iranian population and encourage universal participation in the modern history of the country. Secondly, the contradictory nature of mediated subjectivity has made it a highly dynamic phenomenon with an exhibited tendency for transformation from within. The nature of mediated subjectivity in Iran has shown the dynamic interaction of Islam and modernity. It has revealed the complex relation between forces of modernity and the realization of metaphysics of monotheism. Thus one might say that despite their often antagonist relations, God and the Juggernaut--monotheism and modernity-- are not totally antithetical entities and in fact the former may be reincarnated in modern forms. The implications of this point for the study of categories such as modernity and pre-modernity, religion and democracy, tradition and change which are often depicted as mutually exclusive and totally discontinuous, are quite significant. The case of Iran demonstrates the complex and dialectical relationships and the areas of continuity and discontinuity between these two sets of categories often discussed in the literature of development and modernization.

The unfolding of the internal dynamism of mediated subjectivity in the revolutionary Islamic discourse has given rise to two mostly opposing discourses in the post-revolutionary period. As it seems

now, these two tendencies have adopted the opposite poles that were simultaneously present in the revolutionary Islamic discourse of Shariati, Motahhari and Khomeini and have taken them to their logical conclusions. The trend primarily articulated by Abdolkarim Sorush represents the affirmative moment of mediated subjectivity and strives to posit human subjectivity even though it takes a detour from the path pursued by its intellectual predecessors. The opposite trend, represented by Davari Ardakani, has elaborated on the negative side of the Islamic revolutionary discourse and attempted to eliminate the humanist element in contemporary Iran. Of course, neither of these trends is confined to the theoretical level and both have engendered socio-political discourses of their own, taking truly opposite positions regarding the process of socio-political democratization in the post-revolutionary Iran. The doctrine of a democratic religious polity, articulated by Sorush and his cohorts portends to be a very significant development in Iran. If implemented it could usher a new era in the process of establishment of democracy in Iran and the region, because of its broad base in the populace as well as respect for individual subjectivity/citizenship.

One potential area of commonality that these otherwise disparate trends, however, might share is their tendency toward adoption of modern technology. This potentiality seems particularly ominous if attempted by the conservative groups. Given the antagonism displayed by the conservative forces toward the cultural aspects of modernity one the one hand, and the strong desire for technology in Iran on the other hand, these forces have articulated the idea of

selectively borrowing modern technology. If this eventuality does occur, the adoption of the technology of modernity without its cultural accompaniments will give rise to a second regime of positivist modernity in which the doctrine of "morality of the east and technology of the west," would be reincarnated in a religious body.

Whatever the short term effects of the twisted process of unfolding modernity might be in Iran, in the long run the nature of religion in Iran will be very different from what it has been in the past. After more than 150 years into the ups and downs of the revolution of subjectivity, religion and nature of religiosity will inevitably be changed. As Louis Dupre has observed about the evolution of religion in the West, as a result of the revolution of subjectivity there has been a shift in religion's center of gravity, "from the objective institution to the subjective individual" (Dupre 1982, 24). The subjectivization of religion is the preliminary but necessary condition for pluralistic religiosity which seem in process of development in Iran today.

This study has been primarily concerned with the theoretical and ontological foundations of the emergence of civil society and the institutions of citizenship. I have paid much less attention to structural factors in this process. However, in post-revolutionary Iran, as a result of the interaction between these two sets of factors, the stage for the emergence of civil society and the attitudinal dimension of citizenship seems to be in the process of being prepared. As I mentioned in Chapter 6, a curious combination of fragmentation among the ruling clerics and economic hardship in the

post-revolutionary period have contributed to the formation and articulation of expectation of democratic reforms and economic development. The mobilization of the population during the revolution and the war has lead to the arousal of the expectation to participate in the socio-political affairs of the country by a large proportion of the population. Moreover, as Ali Banuazizi has observed, economic shrinkage and the consequent cutbacks in government spending have led to

a frenzy of activity and entrepreneurship in the small-scale private sector of the economy -- the small farmers, cultivators of produce, bazaar merchants and traders, proprietors and workers in small urban workshops and service establishments, and those in the so called informal sector -- which accounts for whatever dynamism is left in the national economy." (Banuazizi 1995, 564).

All these factors in interaction with ideational factors, have led to what seems to be a rudimentary stage in the emergence of a popularly based civil society quite apart from and antagonistic toward the state in the post-revolutionary Iran. The manners in which this antagonism is expressed vary to a large extent from occasional outbreaks of spontaneous riots to more prevalent forms of negative resistance displayed by various groups and strata. Women from most walks of life, in particular have displayed resourcefulness and ingenuity in their resistance toward the repressive policies of the state in recent years. (Banuazizi 1995, 577). The outcome of the presidential elections in the Spring of 1997, in which a candidate close to the theoretical positions articulated by Sorush and his colleagues was-- to the surprise of many observers of Iranian politics

elected to the presidency-- an election that was much affected by Iranians of all walks of life, but especially the young and women, who displayed a sense of having the right to participate in determining their own destinies and the affairs of their country.

In the absence of reliable data it is difficult to measure the attitudinal dimensions of the development of the rights of citizenship in a country such as Iran. Yet, there are some indications of the beginnings of the process of empowerment and de-marginalization among various subaltern strata, even among the historically abject tribal groups and the peasantry. Field workers conducting research recently in Iran have reported a change in the sense of political abjection and development of a feeling of subjectivity among the urban underclass and the rural populations, which constitutes the foundations of attitude of citizenship.¹

This observations poses the question of the nature of the Islamic revolution and the Islamic State in Iran. There is no doubt that the Islamic rule in Iran has been one of the most oppressive experiences of the Iranian people in recent history. The pain and the sufferings that have been imposed on the diverse population of Iran and

¹ See, for example the report by Kaveh Ehsani(1995) on the social changes that have occurred in Iran since the revolution and the war. He has observed that as a result of participation in the revolution and the war the traditionally subaltern groups have developed a sense of subjectivity which manifests itself in the defiance of the state and its officials. "This was demonstrated" Ehsani writes, "vividly when this writer accompanied an official of the Ministry of Agriculture, who had to collect data from peasant workers in the fields. In one case after another, we drove to the edge of the field where the official would call over to a busy peasant who, invariably ignoring us, continued with his work. As we waded through the mud, dressed in our city shoes and clothes, my companion sounded decidedly nostalgic when he mused over the old days when the peasants would 'drop their shovels and whatever they were doing, and submissively run over the moment an official Jeep turned the corner of the village'".

different groups since the triumph of the Islamic revolution of 1979 are well documented and need not be repeated here. Yet, the unintended consequences of the Islamic revolutionary process might prove to be different. In this study I have undertaken the analysis of the potentiality of such consequences by analyzing the discourses that have informed the foundations of Iranian socio-political consciousness since the encounter with modernity. I have attempted to show the potentiality of bringing modernity to Iran by an unlikely candidate, i.e., the Shi'i clerisy, as a result of the unfolding of the contradictions of the Islamic discourse issuing in these unintended consequences. If the course of events actually results in such an outcome, the historically significant role played by Islamic forces in this process would be mostly related to their emphasis on the social universal and encouragement of mass socio-political activity. In the case of that eventuality the role played by the Islamic factor should also be considered as transitory, acting in a parturient capacity on the tortured road to modernity.

The achievement of modernity also entails the overcoming of mediated subjectivity characteristic of the Islamic discourse and movement and the eventual arrival of more direct forms of subjectivity. This in turn entails the problems associated with the monadic subjectivity that has been experienced in the modern west, which can only be remedied by maintaining the balance between subjectivity and universality.

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